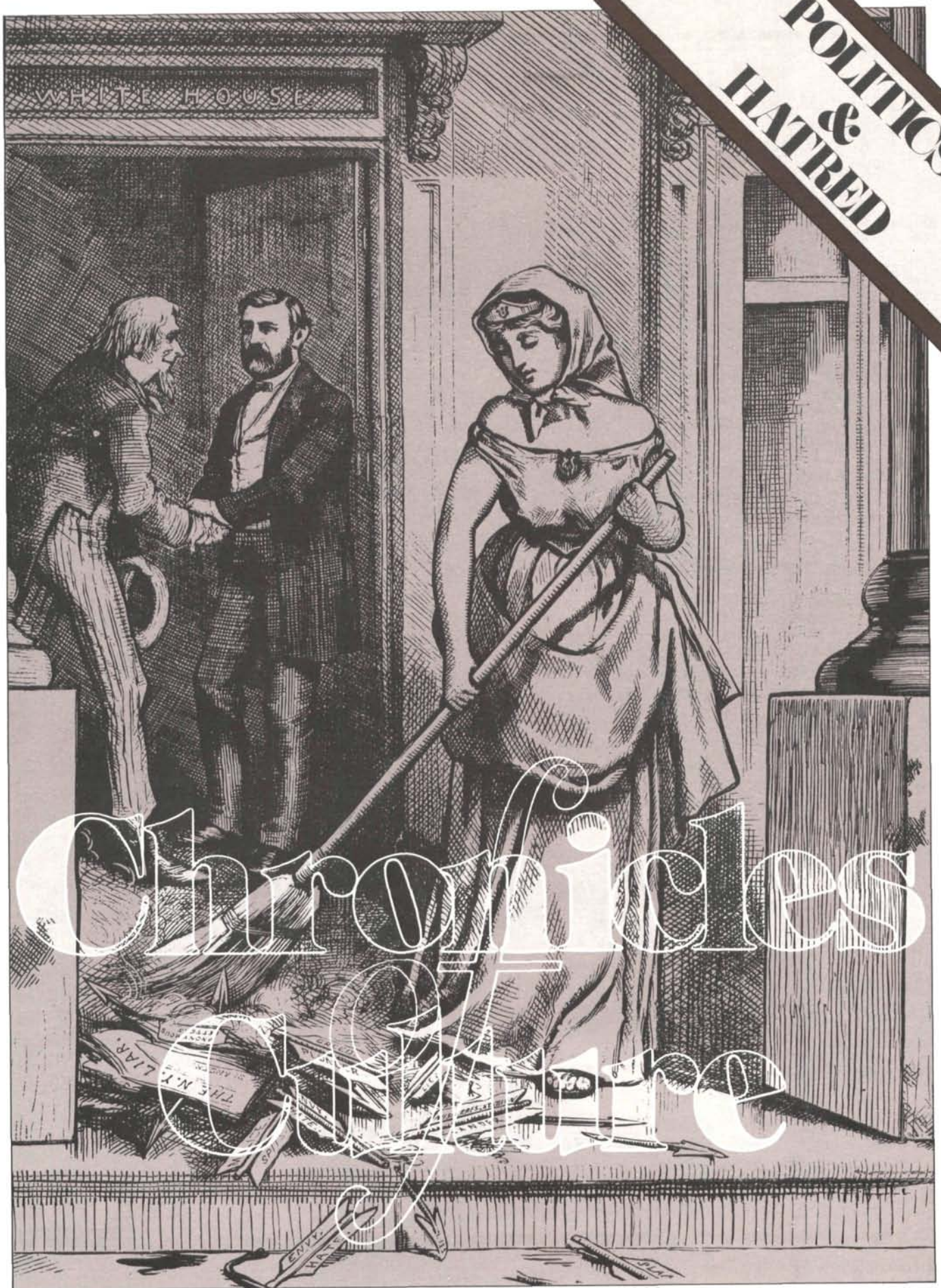

POLITICS & HATRED

Chronicles of Culture

Volume 4, Number 4 July/August 1980

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Politics & Hatred

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Editor's Comment

> Four years of mindless Reagan? Is this really what the great republic has wrought in the first election of its third century?
>
> —Professor Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.
> in the *Wall Street Journal*

Countless words, phrases, sentences, invectives, insults, sneers and epithets could be quoted, but, for some reason, this contumely from a learned, civilized, sophisticated dean of liberal sentiments struck me as the acme of viciousness. Mouths contorted with hatred, lips deformed by wrath, typewriters cracking under disjointed virulence, the proverbial pens poisoned with venom, microphones bursting with acrimony—all these compose into a symphony of hatred. "In America," recently wrote Michael Harrington, a prominent man of the left, "there is a left based on hatred alone." He knows what he is talking about. And Ronald Reagan suddenly rose to the role of a Hollywoodish St. Sebastian: he's supposed to absorb this swarm of arrows dipped in malignity and still flash that routine MGM or Paramount smile which wins elections. After all, he is an actor, which, of course, is held against him as the ultimate in mockery. But Mrs. Helen Gahagan Douglas, who ran against Nixon in 1950, was also an actress. Today, her memory is the paradigm of saintliness: she was enough of a procommunist and archliberal to put her previous acting career into the category of irresistible charms. As we all know by now, there are politically proper actors and improper ones, and the latter are, of course, unsuited for public office in spite of all the adulation lavished on screen actors by this society for nearly a century—an idolatry which, in the end, made an actor-president a natural and inevitable consequence. Actorship was never an argument against Paul Newman's or Jane Fonda's political activities; the difference between proper and improper is decreed by the media, in the same way they designate proper and improper wealth. Why the Coors Brothers' fortune, founded on brewing, is reprobate while that of the Kennedys, founded on bootlegging liquor, is godly remains one of the deepest mysteries of opinion-making in America.

It would be incorrect to claim that American elections, especially presidential ones, are exercises in serenity and camaraderie. They have always been suffused with passions, intemperateness, vehemence, rabidity, zealousness, fury, anger, outrage, opprobrium. And hatred. Yet the current potential to unfurl hatred, and its present one-sidedness, unilateralism, partisanship and despotism are of a novel variety. It all started with the disproportionate political power of the media during the Nixon years. Nixon was the first to be excoriated, not for being an unacceptable politician, but for being the embodiment of evil. He was the most beloved figment of liberal imagination—Satan, the devil, Lucifer incarnate. He was hated not so much for what he did but for who he was—a symbol of wrongness and badness that needed no proof of its abjectness. Figures of demonology require no attributable, tangible or verifiable misdeeds: their mere potential for perniciousness is duly hated. Professor Galbraith once wrote that the Nixon years were actually a period of the largest possible freedom of the press, unmatched in history. Yet the most repeated substantiation of his Satanism was his suppression of freedom. In the Middle Ages, there was a widespread belief that children were good when they feared the devil. Liberals are good if they cross themselves and spit whenever Nixon's name is mentioned aloud.

Let's face it: the press create witch hunts these days, and they do it in a fundamentally inchoate way, creating a mass of incongruities on which hatred thrives.

Why is Mr. Reagan so hated? Why is what he is and what he says so unpardonable? Despite all the shrillness of symbols, images, superficial denominations and platitudinous projections—the fight against him is of supreme momentousness. Despite all his simplicity and less-than-middlebrow predilections, despite the plastic and mass-packaged delivery of his commonsensical prescriptions—he somehow hit the very core of the contemporary political dilemma. And he did it with authentic correctness, intuitive rationality and convincing integrity which turned his opponents into implacable enemies, overcome by blind rage.

There are two powerful traditions in the American political history—one is the politics of argumentation as moral principle and the other is the politics of the three C's—compromise, concession and consensus—as moral principle. They have crisscrossed American reality for two centuries now, often in a disorderly manner, popping up at random in political people and political situations. The Democratic Party has long been a party of compromise, consensus and concession: Southern planters and Jewish labor organizers had to learn to live together in order to win elections. The Republican Party, once the progeny of moral argument, has moved during the last 30 years toward the politics of concession and compromise, known in political lingo as "broadening the party's base." However, deeper differentiations emerge: since World War II, American society seems to be divided more and more along the lines of either consensus or argumentation cum principle—and everything boils down to defining the principle which keeps the two parties apart. This is an ideological contention, and those who refuse to see it that way will sooner or later be rejected. The triumph of ideology over pragmatism and compromise is a historical inevitability, and Ronald Reagan, popularizer that he is, senses it. There's nothing for the

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defenders of consensus political ethics as the supreme wisdom and virtue to do but call him mindless and wicked, while they seethe with hatred.

In fact, it was the Democratic Party which first overstepped the conditioning of the three C's—hesitantly under Roosevelt, Truman and Johnson, and at full speed when they named Senator McGovern and Mr. Carter as standard-bearers. The current ideology of the Democratic Party is structured on the supremacy of social rights over social obligations. This ideological principle promulgates the pursuit of social privilege at any price—moral or rational—unqualified by any consideration other than the particular interests of the social segment, ethnic minority, or whatever social group that claims to be underprivileged or shortchanged. Morally, this principle is called a concern for the oppressed and needy, but dialectically it leads to a neolaissez faireism. Of course, that doesn't mean *economic* laissez faireism, which has long since been suppressed by the now-hoary concept of federal authority. It means a social, cultural, behavioral and personal laissez faireism of unprecedented magnitude, in which the interplay of trendy selfishness, self-servingness and the disintegration of sociomoral norms has begun to tear at the very fabric of American reality.

But the Republican Party does not share this pattern of political thinking: during the Nixon-Ford years, a period when the party had some deceptive successes in spite of its outright disasters, the party ideologues were speaking about the American social mosaic and the need to work according to its political conditioning. No one saw any degenerative marks in the rhetoric of the three C's; no one noticed the corruptive ineffectiveness of its long-term political objectives.

No one—except Ronald Reagan. Whether he perceived the problem by dint of intuition or cerebral effort or by stubbornly sticking to long-accepted tenets devised by others is hard to establish. He certainly is not a Periclean statesman, a new Disraeli of charisma; he doesn't even pretend to be. But he has generated some kind of impulse for wide, far-reaching positiveness of mass thinking rooted in a hearty negativism, in a fully justified rejection of what the elites—political, social, economic, cultural—have been cramming down the throats of the people. Reaganism has become a vehicle for disgust with the liberal cant, with liberal lies, with the tyranny of liberal conceptual platitudes, with the liberal cultural totalitarianism as embodied by the omnipotent media. For some yet-undisclosed and unresearched reasons, he has begun to communicate with people who see in him their expressions of fear and revulsion, that have been so skillfully ignored, or silenced, by the New York-Washington alliance of government and press bureaucracies (which will do everything they can to prevent the people from voicing their undistorted preferences). Call it conservative populism, but whatever it is, it has suddenly come to represent everybody among both the enlightened and the simple folks—who may buy the *Chicago Tribune* or switch on *ABC News,* but who refuse to buy their vitiated worldview and rigged values. Liberals like to think that there is still a clear-cut equation between an antiliberal and a redneck in today's America, but they are dwelling in the past. Antiliberalism now equates with thoughtfulness and concern; it may come from reading Burke or from one's innate common sense. Of course, what the liberals want to see behind Reagan is a cohort of gun maniacs, welfare-baiters and little old ladies in sneakers. They refuse to see behind him the mounting wave of those who know about von Mises's modern economic ethics, Schumpeter's merciless social analysis, Wilhelm Röpke's political studies, Solzhenitsyn's descriptions of contemporary evil, and Robert Nisbet's and Thomas Molnar's treatises on conservative humanism. Ronald Reagan himself may be unaware of the parentage of his philosophical principles, but then, does the chairman of General Motors realize how much the body styling of his cars owes to Picasso? Liberals prefer to ignore the existence of men like von Mises, Molnar and Röpke: they banish them from magazine stands and educational television panels. They forge a monument of their own obscurantism, which makes them astonished when someone like Reagan appears.

Nor will they ever understand that the age of hustling and juggling ideas, so profitable for lowbrow, self-serving politicians from Mark Twain's time to the big-city political machine era, is slowly drawing to an end. They still try gimmicks like the "fiscal conservative/social liberal" label, oblivious to the fact that, sooner or later, this little shell game will be thoroughly discredited in the mind of even the naivest of voters. There is no such thing as a fiscal conservative and social liberal: the root cause of liberal economic profligacy

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Literature in America

A "syndicated columnist" from Washington commemorates the recently deceased Henry Miller. "After living in France and Greece for a number of years, Miller returned to America only to find something horribly wrong," writes the columnist. And he invokes a quote from one of Miller's essays: "What do I find wrong in America? Everything."

History teaches us that Miller did not go back to live in Greece or France. He spent the rest of his life in America, where everything was so horribly wrong, as an affluent and inveterately venerated writer. Gratitude is the most difficult of arts. Or, as Dostoyevski once said: "I believe the best definition of man is the ungrateful biped." □

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The Beauty of Order & the Charisma of Mess

Sidney Hook: *Philosophy and Public Policy;* Southern Illinois University Press; Carbondale and Edwardsville, Illinois.

Jeremy Rifkin with Ted Howard: *The Emerging Order: God in the Age of Scarcity;* G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York.

by James J. Thompson, Jr.

Frustration and sadness swept over me as I finished reading these two books, for I realized that while thousands of people will sacrifice ten dollars for Jeremy Rifkin's *The Emerging Order*—and worse, be taken in by his sloganeering—probably only a handful of readers will happen upon Sidney Hook's distillation of his writings since 1945 on public policy. 'Tis a pity, for Rifkin's book simply adds to the ever-mounting pile of "pop" social analysis that asks superficial questions and responds with cheap answers. Sidney Hook, by contrast, brings the accumulated wisdom of a long and intellectually fruitful life to bear upon issues that have long bedeviled political and social philosophers.

If one inclines to the misapprehension that the American left forms a monolithic conspiracy to undermine the foundations of the Republic, the juxtaposition of Rifkin with Hook will dispel that notion. The similarities between these two writers begin and end with their desire to establish a socialist society in America. Hook, now retired after a long tenure as professor of philosophy at New York University, presents in *Philosophy and Public Policy* essays published between 1945 and 1978 that apply his method of "experimental naturalism," or, more simply, pragmatism, to such disparate topics as foreign policy, freedom of expression, equality of opportunity and "The Hero in History." The central thread that binds these essays into a logical whole arises from Hook's belief that the formulation of public policy must rest upon a bedrock of reason, incisive intelligence, free and enlightened discourse, attention to practicalities and a deep appreciation for the "ironies and tragic cruelties of history."

Disdaining Sidney Hook's moderate and reasoned approach, Jeremy Rifkin claims nothing less than the combined offices of doomsayer, prophet and savior. In the first section of *The Emerging Order*—"The Great Economic Transformation"—he chants a familiar litany: "There is absolutely no way to maintain existing growth rates. We have run up against the fixed limits of the ecosystem of the planet earth." Ecological disaster awaits America if it does not embrace Rifkin's vision of an egalitarian and near-propertyless "ideal steady state." But just when one has pegged Rifkin as simply one more secular messiah come to sing yet another variation on the old tune of utopianism, something goes awry: Jeremy Rifkin has discovered Christianity. Not for him the chic liberalism of mainline Protestantism, though; he has latched on to that "Old-Time Religion," now cloaked in the garb of the New Evangelicalism and the Charismatic movement. Armed with this discovery, Rifkin plunges into the second part of his thesis: the Charismatics will supply "the *liberating energy* that is essential for any full-scale assault on the authority of the existing economic (and political) order," and the New Evangelicals will "provide the philosophical components that are vital in developing a reformulated theological doctrine for a new order and a new covenant." One's head fairly swoons at the daring of what Rifkin would like to pull off: Billy Graham and Jane Fonda strolling hand in hand into the future.

For Sidney Hook's sake, I hope he remains unaware of Rifkin's curious foray into socialist theorizing; surely it would present an unwelcome intrusion into Hook's well-earned retirement. I can imagine even Sidney Hook's philosophical calm being shattered as he thunders: "My God, the boy is mad!" For Rifkin mounts a savage attack upon reason, especially as embodied in science and technology. He links these features of Western civilization to the Protestant work ethic and its desire to rationalize the world and to promote economic growth and material abundance. Against these forces, Rifkin counters with the Charismatics: their "liberating energy," in the form of the "special gifts" of faith healing, speaking in tongues, and prophesying, constitutes "a direct assault on the age of science and a materialistic world view based on technique and horizontal expansion."

Rifkin tempts me toward agreement, for science and technology have frequently been guilty of an all-consuming imperialism, and rationalism has often confined man's vision to a severely restricted field. But admitting this, it does not follow that salvation lies with a moiling mass of Charismatics. These people would redeem us from rationalism at the cost of an emotionalism that would make previous epidemics of anti-intellectualism in America look like child's play. One man's communion with the Spirit is another man's surrender to the explosive forces that lurk in the human psyche. Christianity has frequently been confronted with men and women who would by-pass reason in search of an ecstatic union with the Divine; sometimes they have turned out to be saints, but more often they have amounted to nothing more than self-deluded sowers of discord. It remains unclear whether Rifkin believes in the spiritual authenticity of this latest wave of communing with the Spirit; Sidney Hook, in an essay published in 1970, perhaps best explains what stimulates

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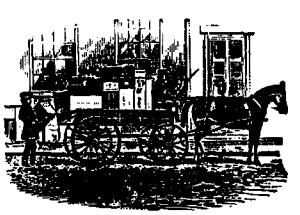
Rifkin's fancy for the Charismatics: "For the New Left and its cogeners," Hook writes, " 'science' and 'reason' are suspect tools of the Establishment used to fashion rationalizations in behalf of the *status quo.*" There is indeed a method to Jeremy Rifkin's madness.

To dismiss Rifkin as nothing more than a cynical exploiter of Charismatic antirationalism will not suffice, though. Rifkin states flatly: "America is a Christian nation"; Christianity alone offers the sense of transcendence Rifkin needs for his New Order. Drawing upon such writers as Francis Schaeffer, Rifkin argues that the New Evangelicals have initiated a revolution in Christian theology, one that will replace the Protestant work ethic's exploitative attitude toward the natural world with a "conservation ethic." Rifkin may impress some readers with his flashing insight, but, in reality, he exposes the shallowness of his grounding in 20th-century Christian thought. A more profound treatment of the same ideas that Rifkin hails as revolutionary appears in G. K. Chesterton's *Orthodoxy* (1908), and more recently in *For the Life of the World* (1973), Alexander Schmemann's rendering of the sacramental theology of Eastern Orthodoxy. Chesterton and Schmemann propose a "conservation ethic" of sorts without the glib superficiality of such New Evangelicals as Schaeffer. But to Rifkin's credit, he correctly sees that America desperately needs a spiritual revival that will combat materialism and provide the transcendence our nation has so sorely missed in recent times.

Sidney Hook bridles at such talk. As a self-proclaimed "militant secularist," he dismisses religion as nothing more than "consolation to the individual for the irremediable evils and tragedies of existence," and he fears that pining after transcendence will lead to "ecclesiastical fascism." Hook has his own religion, though—democracy; "instead of a revival of religious faith in general, we should work specifically toward a revival, or a new birth, of faith in democracy." That has a familiar ring. Since the early days of the Republic Americans have been exhorted by the cheerleaders of democracy to make a religion of their social and political system. Who needs God when you can claim equality with your fellows, force your governors to grovel for your vote, and march triumphantly to the polls to participate in the rituals of the great secular religion?

Disturbing as Sidney Hook's worship of democracy and denigration of Christianity may be, one would be sadly mistaken to turn to Jeremy Rifkin for wisdom. Rifkin evinces no deep personal commitment to Christianity; like Charles Maurras in the France of the 1920's, he welcomes Christians to his cause and seeks to use the Faith to flay his enemies. For that reason, Rifkin's *The Emerging Order* promises to be a troublesome and potentially dangerous book. Many Charismatics and New Evangelicals will rejoice at the recognition accorded them by Rifkin. They have been accustomed to suffering from the barbs of the intellectually sophisticated, while liberal religionists—the Harvey Coxes and William Sloane Coffins of the world—have pranced about in the flattering spotlights of the media. Can the Charismatics and New Evangelicals be blamed if they bask in their new-found acclaim?

Sad to say, some God-fearing folks will probably be taken in by Rifkin's cleverness. Rifkin desperately wants to hasten in "The Emerging Order," and if he can ride to glory on the backs of the practitioners of glossolalia he will do so. But well-meaning men and women of the Charismatic and New Evangelical persuasions had best take a cold, hard look at Rifkin's New Order. With a forced redistribution of wealth, with no private property other than "consumer goods and services," and with a careful regimentation of our lives lest we upset the ecological balance, we will dwell in something considerably short of utopian bliss. The Charismatics will furnish an emotional opiate to help us forget our troubles, and a new breed of Protestant theologians will write learned treatises on "Our Friends the Trees." Jeremy Rifkin will scurry about sniffing out the reactionary running dogs of reason, science, technology and the Protestant work ethic.



In the battle for America in which conservatives have unsheathed the sword, Jeremy Rifkin stands on the other side of the barricades. But Sidney Hook should not be consigned there simply because he espouses socialism, for our present plight transcends any neat dichotomy between competing economic systems. Hook cares deeply about freedom—after all, he has been battling Stalinists and assorted totalitarians longer than many of today's conservatives have been alive. He favors a strongly anticommunist foreign policy, and on the domestic front he recognizes the need for "considerable private enterprise" to accompany his socialistic measures. For conservatives who doubt which side Hook is on, consider this: he denounces the new left, deplores the law's protection of smut-peddling pornographers, opposes "reverse discrimination," and assails the "ritualistic liberals" ("those who think they can be liberal without being intelligent") for their sentimental blather about the rights of criminals. For those still unconvinced, I submit this clincher: "Lillian Hellman," Hook writes, "is an eager but unaccomplished liar."

Conservatives rightly cast a skeptical eye upon anyone who calls for cooperation with the left. Throughout the 20th century American leftists have spearheaded the attack on religion and the family and have poured their energies

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into such causes as radical feminism, homosexual rights and abortion on demand. They have sought in every way to foment a social and moral revolution. We have justifiably come to associate the left with moral decay and social upheaval. But something is stirring in the ranks. Witness Christopher Lasch's defense of the family in *Haven in a Heartless World,* and Dale Vree's denunciations of social and moral radicalism in the pages of the *New Oxford Review.* Conservatives need to take cognizance of such developments, and Sidney Hook's *Philosophy and Public Policy* furnishes a splendid place to begin. Hook phrases the matter succinctly: "The most fundamental question of our age is not socialism or capitalism." The true divide exists between those who promote moral and social chaos (whether socialist or capitalist in their economics) and those who stand for decency and the preservation of the traditional strengths embodied in our social order. □

Style and a Single William F. Buckley, Jr.

William F. Buckley, Jr.: *Saving the Queen;* Wyndham Publications Ltd.; London (Paperback edition).

William F. Buckley, Jr.: *Stained Glass;* Warner Books; New York (Paperback edition).

William F. Buckley, Jr.: *Who's on First;* Doubleday & Co.; New York.

by Mary Ellen Fox

Faced with three volumes of William Buckley's belles-lettres, one is bound to ask: Is there more to them than meets the eye? Is his chosen genre the best vehicle for carrying some currently unaccepted ideas about values (simple and not-so-simple ones) and their defense? Has the author (artist? writer? novelist? poet?) settled for *le roman d'espionnage* because it absolves him from larger demands of style, literariness and intellectuality in his pursuit of not-too-clearly established goals? Or are all these questions irrelevant because we are dealing with a leisurely exercise of a mind usually involved in more complex realms of knowledge and social responsibility? After all, the history of culture records countless examples of literary frolics conceived as a refined pastime.

Style may be the key word. As we know now, style—its semantic meaning expanded by the cultural vicissitudes of the ripeness of our civilization—has become in our day both the medium and the message. And perhaps more—an ideological directive. And maybe even more—an intellectual tropism, an orientation, a disposition of both rationality and moral impulse. And God knows whether these new attitudes of style do not, ultimately, transmute it into a factual political and cultural power, an agent of influence which transcends the area of form and becomes the substance, if not the very nature, of things. Thus, in order to tackle style as the crystallization of both essence and formal compound, let's have a look at the following: Style and a Single William F. Buckley, Jr.

Buckley may correctly be considered one of the initiators (if not founders) of a movement—after all, modern American conservatism began to express itself audibly and cogently with the launching and organization of the *National Review* enterprise. As a journal of opinion and ideological exploration, *NR* reached deeper than any similar venture into the consciousness of all those who were dissatisfied with liberalism and its protracted reign over the American intelligentsia. However, *NR's* valiant endeavors to bring light into darkness and to restructure mentalities never translated into a larger cultural pattern, an idiosyncratic flair, a distinct multidimensional civilizational proposition—in a word: style. *NR* has a political personality, social convictions, cultural preferences, a scholarly identity, but it has failed to establish a literary selfdom, to present the world with its own brand of sophistication which would be fully separate from and antithetical to the liberal orthodoxies and clichés, to create a mood about and around itself which would translate into a pneuma, an id, commanding and capricious if need be, but significant enough to make the American cultural universe reckon with it.

But Buckley has not failed. He has succeeded in everything his *NR* has not. By now he is the closest counterpart to Oscar Wilde (no suspicion cast) that New York has produced, in that he has come to embody a unity of character with conviction, the symbiosis of individuality with its public, civic, intellectual and existential properties. He failed at creating a movement, but he created for himself the best possible image under the circumstances; he worked out a phenomenon, a symbol, a one-man movement of ideas, an epitome. It's a dangerous occurrence, susceptible to the weaknesses of eccentricity, but it has been flawless over the years in its sure-fire instinct for where to go and at what pace. Buckley's Rock Hudson-*Pillow Talk* lapels and narrow ties might have connoted shabby-genteelism at some point—an aspersion which could have been cast at the entire conservative syndrome during the times of the *Esquire-Playboy* subculture's paltry ebullience—in the end it has come to mean the victory of intellectual constancy. The early President Kennedy sartorial apparel on Buckley's trim silhouette began to emerge in the pages

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of *Women's Wear Daily,* making the triumph of style-cum-idea complete. Buckley's persona had finally begun to connote his life accomplishments. He then started to write spy fiction. He engendered a hero (in whose image?) who (all indications are there) was an attempt at reification à la mode. Fighting evil alone—even the evil of communist power which is so much ampler than a gang in a frontier town—is the oldest American tradition of fiction. Thus, if Buckley's team somehow failed to track down and annihilate all the evils lurking in the jungle of the Liberal Culture, the originator of *National Review* has to fulfill the code of honor himself, even if all he has for weapons are a Smith-Corona and the best-seller list. I thus salute Mr. William F. Buckley's style as something which single-handedly brings back the cultural wistfulness of philosopher-dandies whose consciences are sensitized to their cerebral responsibilities.

We, then, are witnessing a curious cultural spectacle: the renascence of conservative idealism. For decades, the liberal cognoscenti did everything they could to relegate conservative idealism —a time-honored sentiment and propensity—to the musty attic of moral attitudes where school textbooks with Victorian lithography are gathering dust. On the other hand, some conservatives, especially those of the fiscal-economic variety, did everything they could to torpedo it on the grounds that theirs was the ideology of pragmatism and common sense, of sober ideas, not do-goodism, of practical problem-solvers, not romantic knights. However, in a social climate which emphasizes newness at any price, fifty years of liberal sway has made the conservative insistence on traditional answers the very essence of newness. Buckley understood correctly that a new conservative idealism that could be shouldered as the mantle of noblesse oblige and symbolize a decision to serve could be promoted as the vision of a future built on the values of the past. Making conservative ideas chic and endowing them with a certain cachet may sound flippant but it is in fact a serious concept: once something is perceived as fashionable, mass acceptance will eventually follow, as it did with American liberalism.

The spy novel may be as good, if not a better, tool as any to perpetuate and popularize conservative idealism. But the novel of espionage has undergone, in the second part of the 20th century, quite a metamorphosis: it has become a vehicle to present no less serious a struggle than that between right and wrong, good and evil. Following the path of the American western, the spy novel has become a modern morality play, especially in the works of Greene and le Carré, which are, most frequently, indictments of a blurred—or even lack of—morality. The tradition of mystery fiction (Hugo, Sue, Poe, *The Moonstone* and so on) is structured on a specific literary mastery: its practitioner must know how to fuse suspense with ratiocination, how to inject the page-turning imperative (thrill) with mental speculations as to who? why? how? However, in our time, the post-Spillane, post-Fleming era, eroticism of the fast-but-compelling-and-blunt variety has become an indispensable ingredient.

There's an irony, therefore, that in texts which occasionally gorge on sexual pastiche, a certain lack of expertise prevents Buckley from giving lightness and the charm of innuendo to the dialogue, from suffusing the OSS (obligatory sex scenes) with something more than the regular fare of the orgasmic racket and plastic violence of the current best sellers. The gesturing and talking in bed, as well as every stab at descriptive evaluation of the accompanying sensations, seems to be germane to experience; in Buckley's novels women with "pale breasts" abound, and after a few samples it becomes obvious that Buckley is much more at ease when he writes about sailing. Penetrating riddles of faith and existence, or the penetration of St. Augustine's sincerity, or Boethius's dilemmas,

Books in the Mail

No. 12 Kaiserhofstrasse **by Valentin Senger; translated by Ralph Manheim; E. P. Dutton; New York.** The true story of a Jewish family who survived, undetected, inside nazi Germany without going "underground."

The United States in the 1980's **edited by Peter Duignan and Alvin Rabushka; Hoover Institution Press; Stanford, California.** A collection of essays by respected specialists analyzing central issues and policy options for the 80's in both domestic issues and foreign affairs.

Militant Islam **by G. H. Jansen; Harper & Row; New York.** An analysis of the militancy of Islam from 1800 to the present, and an assessment of the future of Islam.

National Health Care in Great Britain: Lessons for the U.S.A. **by John C. Goodman; The Fisher Institute; Dallas, Texas.** An analysis of the economic effects of socialized medicine on Britain's patients, doctors and hospitals, and what that system could do to medical care in the United States.

New Native American Drama: Three Plays **by Hanay Geiogamah; University of Oklahoma Press; Norman, Oklahoma.** The first collection of plays by an Indian playwright: *Body Indian, Foghorn* and *49.*

Punitive Medicine **by Alexander Podrabinek; Karoma/Caroline House Publishers; Ottawa, Illinois.** Description of psychiatric abuse in the Soviet Union, by a dissident Russian paramedic now in exile in Siberia.

The Decade of Women: A Ms. History of the Seventies in Words and Pictures **edited by Suzanne Levine and Harriet Lyons with Joanne Edgar, Ellen Sweet, Mary Thom; Paragon Books/G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York.** A mostly pictorial account of the accomplishments, trials and tribulations of women over the last decade, as seen through feminist eyes.

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seem to serve Buckley best, and he should stay closer to his own semiology of that particular participle, or noun.

It's easy to see that Buckley has followed in the footsteps of Ian Fleming, both in his clear-cut ideological position and in his creation of an irresistibly attractive hero. Blackford Oakes is the obvious antithesis of le Carré's grubby little bureaucrats or Greene's venal guns for hire. James Bond became a folk hero; although his adversaries are always sharply delineated as communist agents, they inhabit the realm of comic books and pop art. Buckley's alter ego, Blackford Oakes, Yale man and knight in modern garb, belongs to a more sophisticated world which is molded by both actors and cerebration.

The ideal of Yale as a templar order which prepares a young man to serve his community as well as himself runs throughout this trilogy. In the past there was some basis for this sentiment, although today such feelings seem overwhelmingly nostalgic and sentimental. The Yale I know has changed since John O'Hara yearned to adopt the Yale identity which, for him, symbolized the American gentleman. And Buckley knows that in our time ideal and reality diverge and has thus set his novels in the Eisenhower 50's, which was the last moment when this idealistic portrait of school and country had any basis. Certainly in the late 60's - early 70's when I was at Yale things were drastically changed: women were on the campus in force, President Brewster marched with the Black Panthers, Nobel scientist Shockley was denied permission to lecture, George Lukacs, a Marxist literary critic, and Kate Millett were required reading for graduate courses in literature.

Blackford Oakes, Yale man turned intelligence operative, is an engaging protagonist: he thinks, he doubts, he has moral qualms, he is a patriot although not uncritical. Despite being a loner and a wanderer, he is a fraternity man. ELI, CIA, WASP—all his letters are the best. He is at his most attractive in *Saving the Queen,* by far the best of Buckley's trilogy. I read the novel when it was first published, and the recent second reading only enhanced my pleasure and approval. It is delightfully written, stylish and ironic. It has a pronounced musicality of literary manner, where words and phrases occur and then reoccur like Wagnerian leitmotifs. The love/hate relationship between the Americans and the English who share a language and thus erroneously assume that they are culturally alike is provocative and convincing. The book is also startling in its accurate foreshadowing of *l'affaire* Blunt, in which the highest British aristocracy, albeit a communist traitor, was protected by position and class allegiance. One of the scenes with the greatest verisimilitude is a meeting between Bolgin, the Soviet operative and Oakes's Moriarity, who fears and loathes the communist regime and has made a great career of avoiding death in the Gulag (in the surrealistic system, Buckley implies, each option is equally plausible), and the traitorous English aristocrat, overcome with idealistic zeal for the fruits of Marx. Reality vs. fantasy are gracefully counterpointed in their relationship.

What makes *Saving the Queen,* Buckley's first novel, far superior to the Fleming *et alia* formula is that it uses sexual tones as something more than just routine seasoning of the conventional spy prose that has been raging for two decades on the best-seller scene. In fact, the novel can be read as perhaps the most trenchant statement since Henry James of differences between the American and English cultures. It builds itself up into a crafty persiflage and an amusing metaphor, a parable as whimsical and bittersweet as it is inventive. It finally amounts to a moving fugue, in which the contrapuntal (Bach was always more of a teacher than entertainer) signals mark the ideological perversities between the forces of good and evil (the great Bolgin-Peregrine Kirk contredanse of commitments). The seemingly trivial, but actually quite subtle, tensions between the American and the English ethos, the American and English sense of importance, as registered by Buckley, could even fascinate James, who had some difficulty acknowledging the weightiness of the pedestrian.

The other two novels become Serious Stuff and the charming ironic distance which characterizes the first book diminishes. The latter two present situations where history stood still for a moment and might have gone in another direction, taken another road. The second, *Stained Glass,* is a totally fictional rendering of a charismatic young German leader who is managing to inflame his country's patriotism to unite the two Germanys and defeat the communists. The third, *Who's on First,* deals with the Soviet Sputnik launch, and hypothesizes a situation where we might have been there before the Russians. However, in both novels the CIA is no longer idealistic but pragmatic, and Blackford too, after much agonizing introspection, makes decisions which compromise his moral innocence. The parallel with America's loss of innocence when forced to confront the new realpolitik is apt and biting. Buckley suggests that America is no longer motivated by righteous idealism but by grubby compromise, and that *we* are the ones ultimately compromised by this accommodation with a reality antithetical to our most fundamental principles and thus, forsaking principle, we are doomed to lose. It may be an emotional message, but the daily news validates it at each step. It's a weighty, complex and very unwieldy idea to promote in our days of transvaluated sophistication, when decency equals demagoguery, saviors are villains, social exemplars are endowed with pea-sized brains, and rock-music drivel counts as poetry. To package such an idea as entertainment and score successes with it may prove the first stop on our journey to almost unobtainable salvation. □

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Sex Almanac for Protozoans

Gay Talese: *Thy Neighbor's Wife;* Doubleday & Co.; New York.

by Herbert I. London

To the publishing world—where the bottom line is seemingly all that counts—the arrival of Gay Talese's *Thy Neighbor's Wife* is described as a major event. That this book has received so much attention is more of a commentary on this nation's values than on Mr. Talese. Wandering through the forest of pornography and perversion, Mr. Talese, a self-proclaimed sexual pioneer, discovers his Eden of liberation. In this Eden people do what they want unrestrained by morality, satisfying others, standards of conformity or common decency. This portrayal of America's dark secret — wife-swapping, promiscuous sex, perversion—is brought to the surface as a dream come true, nirvana in a massage parlor. No longer is there a holding back; now both literally and figuratively one can let it all hang out.

If two teen-agers had arrived at this conclusion after a superficial reading of Wilhelm Reich, it would be understandable. If two members of the "new class" had written this book as a response to Mike Nichols's *Carnal Knowledge,* it could be forgiven. But to think that a journalist with Gay Talese's reputation would write such a book is more than any well-developed imagination can accept. This book takes us on the Eden Express to ineffable pleasures. All one has to do is relax the code of moral proprieties, turn the clock back to prehistory. In fact one should—according to Talese's prescription—give in to urges however primordial they may be.

This argument, which appears to be as ingenuous as Candide facing the verities of life, ignores the totality of human experience. It is as if Gay Talese thinks he has discovered Somerset Maugham's "New-Found-Land" only to find it is Sodom and Gomorrah. His view of liberation is like Charles Reich's Consciousness III, where any restraint is considered a trick of the establishment to ensure social order. Of course evolution of a conscience does translate into order; but it is as much a trick of the establishment—whatever that is—as the belief that concentration in order to learn something is a trick of the FBI to keep you out of trouble.

If desire is not harnessed, the pleasure principle is subject solely to utilitarian standards. Consider this extrapolation, one that Talese would certainly appreciate: if in the act of rape, the rapist derives twenty units of pleasure compared to ten units of displeasure he inflicts on the person being raped, his freedom to act seems socially desirable. The syllogism is logical, but the assumption is absurd. There are simply some acts that shouldn't be condoned regardless of the pleasure obtained.

Talese accepts the adolescent belief that doing what you want makes what you want worth doing. In the process a standard of "anything goes" prevails. At Sandstone, a community where sex is exchanged like handshakes, morality is subordinated to feelings of satisfaction. In reading the section of Talese's book that deals with the community, I was reminded of the hero of *Clockwork Orange* who is a prototype for the "new freedom." His cruel acts make him feel good, so why not do them? The Sandstone described by Talese does not legitimate sadism, but what he ignores is the obvious conformity demanded by the social norm in that setting. Like characters out of Aldous Huxley's novels, the Sandstone crowd is composed of seedy decadents who would prefer to be caught in the act of adultery rather than face a charge of provincialism.

Where is the liberation to which Talese is so fond of referring? Is it possible for the pilgrims in the promised land of blissfully free sex to reject the prevailing expectations? And if so, at what price? It seems to me that liberation now masquerades as the new rigid code of conformity. Can one be a dissenter at Sandstone? Can a college student tell her friends that she is not ready for sexual experimentation without the often-cruel criticism of her peer group? Talese tells us that his generation was "up tight" about sex; it was caught in the bourgeois trap of religious and moral

"A scholarly, readable, and thoroughly entertaining book with enough sex to satisfy anyone . . . Landmark information . . ."
—Virginia Johnson-Masters

"Talese's research has an awesome solidity about it."
—Peter S. Prescott
Newsweek

"He has a serious interest in watching his fellow human beings . . ."
—Robert Coles
New York Times Book Review

"In a sense, the book represents Gay's triumph over the puritanical strictures of Ocean City, strictures that so inhibited him that he didn't even masturbate until his second year in college."
—*Vogue*

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standards which presumably caused shame, guilt, anxiety and neurosis. I won't attempt to explain to Mr. Talese the societal need for guilt; but what I find baffling is his seemingly total insensitivity to the conformist demands of the contemporary liberationists who, like Rousseau, argue that people "should be forced to be free."

For John Bullaro—one of the central actors in *Thy Neighbor's Wife*—an investigation into the orgies at Sandstone "saw whatever love and order that had been the stability of his life sacrificed to the whim of experimentation and change." According to Talese, "he was alone, jobless, without a sense of hope." Yet the Bullaro episode is told and dismissed like an unpleasant exception to the wondrous generalization. Members of a stable family unsheathed from the boundaries of respectable behavior consent to adultery with different partners and find that their lives sink into a cesspool of drink, loveless sex, therapy, divorce and loneliness.

As I recount this experience from Talese's book, I am reminded of Irving Kristol's argument that "whole classes of the population . . . are entering what can only be called, in the strictly clinical sense, a phase of infantile regression." With Abraham Maslow as its spiritual father, this generation of libertarians demands actualization which usually takes the form of sexual indulgence. How can I be a better person, it is argued, if I am not permitted self-expression? To hell with two hundred years of this American social contract. Who cares about four thousand years of civilization? Why concern oneself with bourgeois morality? As a disciple of Jerry Rubin's logic, Talese contends, if it feels good, do it.

The guru at Sandstone—the commune much admired by Talese as the vanguard of sexual reform—is John Williamson, a part-time engineer who became a self-proclaimed philosopher by reading the novels of Ayn Rand. Williamson tells his adherents to feel free, open up, fulfill their sexual fantasies. But when Humpty Dumpty has his great fall, Williamson is not around to pick up the pieces. After all, he's preaching freedom from all ties, even those that might assuage the feelings of loneliness. That Mr. Williamson is an erstwhile engineer may not be coincidental. Sex at Sandstone—at least the sexual encounters described by Talese—are reminiscent of an instructional manual for Tinker Toys. Missing from the description are love, mystery and celebration. Sex has about as much poignancy as automobile mechanics and is engaged in for the same reason: it requires doing. We are told that our humanity is enhanced by open sexuality, but no proof for it can be found in Talese's text.

"Autonomous Man" has always been the goal of liberationists in our midst. And civilization unquestionably has always struggled with the need for social order and a competing desire for pleasure-giving experiences. But as any post-adolescent knows, life isn't all pleasure. Inhibitions can create a social cohesion that results in stability and the attendant value of repose. At a time when morality is determined by people of the couch, not those of the cloth, it is understandable that *Thy Neighbor's Wife* is considered an important book.

The contemporary search for absolute freedom is irresistible. Talese carries the sexual banner marching to the drumbeat of sexual awareness. Yet the irony in this movement seems to escape him. For if any man is free, why associate with those who, by virtue of the association, limit that freedom? The natural concomitant of this argument is that those who are free are also without associations, except, of course, those associations that gratify immediate desires. Since any relationship presumes some degree of commitment, autonomous man must guard against a genuine involvement with others. As a consequence divorce rates soar as each of the mates considers himself a free spirit. Institutions like Sandstone are then created for the free spirits to come together. Curiously, when these free spirits do find meaning through associations, they exhibit a loyalty that borders on zealotry, a zealotry that often leads freedom to the sacrificial altar of the much-ballyhooed "purposeful life."

Hollywood has discovered Talese, and I'm afraid the *Zeitgeist* will duplicate the book with a variety of clones. We are likely to hear three cheers for sexual freedom from the rooftops of *Cosmopolitan, Playboy* and Al Goldstein's scurrilous publications. But when the shouting is subdued, when people are unwilling to accept conventional restraints, and when freedom's real meaning is unraveled, human relationships will have lost their loveliness and we will be in jeopardy of substituting sex for love at the same time we vocally defend a need for universal love. □

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Those Tedious Extremist Victories

Margaret Atwood: *Life Before Man;* Simon & Schuster; New York.

by Stephen L. Tanner

What is literary art supposed to do for us? For a long time people thought it was supposed to help us better understand life and consequently live more successfully. According to this old-fashioned notion, the artist should struggle toward a vision of how things ought to be. This might include describing clearly where we are and what has gone wrong, but underlying it all was the assumption that human endeavor really counts, that there is a way things ought to be, and discovering it and aiming for it make sense. In this traditional approach, an author employs the techniques of art to create order, meaning and a basis for affirmation in an apparently chaotic world of undifferentiated particulars. He aspires to provide some kind of strategy for living. Sometimes he does not struggle enough and disappoints us with naive or facile affirmations, but we sympathize with his intentions.

Margaret Atwood, in her fourth novel, writes within a different tradition, a modern tradition that employs the devices of art to demonstrate that life is ultimately devoid of order and meaning, and human endeavor is at bottom quite ridiculous. The assumptions underlying this conception of literature's function are that writing about any kind of happiness is boring, that giving characters significant conflicts to resolve by responsible, free-willed action is cheating, and that a gloomy, unresolved slice of life realistically portrayed is the essence of serious fiction.

This is a fascinating novel in certain ways and contains a good deal of skillful writing, but it is cynical and pessimistic in a way that makes it irrelevant for most readers. The average person may at times be intrigued by a harsh, bleak description of life, but he never can be convinced in his heart that life totally lacks unselfishness, satisfying sexual relationships and self-fulfillment. I suspect that in order to praise this novel one must be converted to the newer attitudes about what fiction should be, converted to the degree that one does not allow common sense and one's own genuine life experience to break in and discredit the model. Writers in the old tradition sometimes erred by portraying felicity as too-easily achieved; Atwood errs by portraying it as impossible of achievement. Neither approach makes for significant art.

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"... splendid, fully integrated work .... It is superb, complete."
—*New York Times Book Review*

Life Before Man is set in Toronto during 1976 to 1978. The chapters, narrated in the present tense, are dated and alternatingly titled with the names of the three main characters: Elizabeth, Nate and Lesje. They resemble third-person journal entries and allow single characters and incidents to be viewed from a multiple perspective. The plot is easily summarized. Instead of the usual triangle, we have a hexagon. Elizabeth's lover, Chris, has recently committed suicide. Her husband, Nate, tiring of his lover, Martha, begins an affair with Lesje, who has been living with William. Elizabeth retaliates by going to bed with William. Nate, after considerable indecision, leaves Elizabeth to live with Lesje. Nothing works out well for anybody. Two characters commit suicide and five others contemplate it.

To the overworked subject of swapping bed partners, Atwood has added a psychological dimension intended to reveal how the characters became what they are. The dominant influence in each case is feminine. Elizabeth is tough and self-centered because of a weak mother, an irresponsible father and a monstrous Aunt Muriel who raised her. The aunt's personality in turn had been distorted by a male-dominated culture: "Auntie Muriel had a strong personality and a good mind and she was not pretty, and patriarchal society punished her." Nate vacillates in "mid-air" between optimism and pessimism because his mother combines both. She is a do-gooder who keeps a map of the world with pins in it marking the latest cases of oppression. She sees that her son receives the Amnesty International newsletter and wants him to be a legal-aid lawyer. But her optimistic activism masks a cynicism; she chose humanitarian effort as a desperate alternative to suicide after her husband was killed in war. The important influences upon Lesje were her grandmothers, one Ukrainian and one Jewish, who despised each other but doted on her. She is socially insecure, thinking she suffers from a "damaged gene pool." This psychological dimension enhances the novel but smacks of a psychology textbook.

Elizabeth seems to represent the liberated woman. She has a responsible job as a museum administrator. "She hates it when anyone has power over her," and her husband certainly holds no such power. Her marriage with Nate is so open that anything of value in it leaked out, leaving it empty. She insists that Nate "pull his own weight" by following a maze of domestic legalities prescribing when he does the cooking and dishes, which part of the washing is his responsibility, when he is to care for the children, etc. Though he pays half the rent, he feels the house is not as much his as hers. Elizabeth is "big on the value of compromises," but seems unac-

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quainted with the notion of sacrifice. "As long as Nate does his share with the house and children, or what they've wearily agreed is his share, he can help himself to any diversion he chooses. Bowling, building model airplanes, fornication, it's all the same to her." Nothing is *theirs* in this marriage, but always his or hers, even the children. Elizabeth seems convinced "she conceived them through parthenogenesis," and Nate would like to think they "had sprung fully formed from his forehead."

Nate is the liberated man, the uxorious man. Trained as a lawyer, he now makes chic wooden toys to sell in boutiques. He does most of the cooking and child-rearing, at least while Elizabeth recovers from the funk her lover's suicide has left her in. (She resents that act as a personal injury; after all, she simply treated him the way men treat women.) He thinks of himself "as a lump of putty, helplessly molded by the relentless demands and flinty disapprovals of the women he can't help being involved with." Even his two children are female, and he is uneasy in the thought of their becoming women. "They will demand brassieres and then reject them, blaming both needs on him." He never uses the possessive in introducing Elizabeth or Lesje, and when he tells Lesje he would like to have a baby "by" her, he quickly and self-consciously replaces the offending preposition by "with." In short, Nate is the kind of man feminism encourages and creates—only to be disappointed with him when he fails to satisfy its divided wishes.

Lesje is the timid, unassertive woman, an appeaser. She works in the museum as a paleontologist. She is a dedicated and capable scientist but does flunky work and tolerates her superior's condescending attitude toward women. In graduate school her roommate had shamed her into joining a women's group, but she had been more interested in her science classes than in feminist issues. "Now she feels it might have been useful to have listened more carefully." She spends her free thoughts in prehistory, observing dinosaurs from a tree. In this daydream realm she is most comfortable. It is a world before man—hence, I suppose, the novel's title. She is not sure she cares whether the human race survives or not. "The dinosaurs didn't survive and it wasn't the end of the world."

There is a good deal of sexual interaction in the novel. Sexual intercourse is engaged in for a variety of peculiar psychological reasons—for power, as a death wish, to carry out self-deceptive fantasies, etc. But it is never performed for such a boring and unattractive reason as genuine love seeking unselfish and responsible union and procreation. Here, as elsewhere in Atwood's fiction, satisfactory man-woman relationships are absent.

In the end, Elizabeth realizes "that Nate in general is not necessary." "She's built a dwelling over the abyss, but where else was there to build it?" Nate "will lose himself among the apathetic, the fatalistic, the uncommitted, the cynical; among whom he would like to feel at home." And Lesje understands that Nate is not so important, even though she has, in a desperate desire to control him, allowed herself to become pregnant.

This hopelessness about personal relationships is matched in the novel by a corresponding cynicism on the social-political level. The feminist discussion group, Nate's mother's activism, Vietnam War protest, the War Measures Act, the victory of the *Parti Québécois,* a petition condemning misconduct in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the communist revolution in China—all these are brought up only to be discredited. Coming from a leading nationalist and feminist, such treatment is pessimistic indeed. In fact the title suggests that the author would like to revert to prehistory—life before man—and hope that something better might evolve the next time.

There is a curious discrepancy between Margaret Atwood's actions and her fiction. She has been involved in various reformist movements, including some mentioned in this novel, but she questions such movements in her fiction. The novel seems an occasion for examining her attitudes and actions. This may be artistic objectivity, a wise truth-seeking that leaves no propositions uncriticized (a quality that marks the great novelist). But although she is bright enough to perceive the excesses and narrowness of vision often symptomatic of popular causes, she seems to lack firm metaphysics for human affirmation (another mark of the great novelist) and lapses into a glum cynicism.

In the case of feminism, she has passed beyond the usual programmatic woman's novel in which the woman, chafing under male dominance, asserts herself and finds self-fulfillment in a career. She remarked in an interview that Marilyn French's *The Women's Room* scotched that approach. According to Atwood, that novel ends with the heroine walking on the beach saying, "What the hell is this all about? I did it one way and it didn't work. And then I went and got my Ph.D. from Harvard, and that's rotten as well. And all I'm left with is these nightmares about this man in my room." In *Life Before Man,* perhaps we get a glimpse of the consequences of the negative and destructive elements of feminism (even the best of causes suffer from extremism). When those elements triumph, the victory is an empty one.

Margaret Atwood, an accomplished poet, brings remarkable language skills to the writing of her novels. It is for good reason that she is considered an important Canadian writer. It is regrettable, therefore, that such talent is undirected by some vision of modern life which most people would consider more accurate. □

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Thanatos for Two

John Hawkes: *The Passion Artist;* Harper & Row; New York.

Ralph de Toledano: *Devil Take Him;* G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York.

by Joseph Schwartz

The fictional world of John Hawkes is absurd for two reasons, each affecting his perception of reality. First, it contains no pattern of cause and effect. What one gets instead is the flow of sensations and eccentric spatial juxtapositions, establishing the indefiniteness of nowhere even when, apparently, we are supposed to be somewhere. Second, and more important, the enduring values upon which we presume life can be understood—order, justice, divinity—are replaced by disorder, lawlessness, nothingness. Each of his narratives embraces the combination of Thanatos and Eros which so fascinates him. A character in a previous novel remarked that: "Darkness can come to Ilyria." It is a crucial statement for all of Hawkes's work. What our commonly shared experiences and values are unjustly contrasted with is some Elysium, unarticulated by Hawkes and hence never subject to examination. It remains instead a tacit personal dream of what might be, something as simple-minded as uninhibited erotic love. Although it is formally unspecified, this Elysium remains the standard which moves him to become the "connoisseur of deformity," that irony which reveals the emptiness of our best hopes. It draws him naturally toward what he calls "the modes of incongruity," the principal method of his fiction.

The Passion Artist, the most Kafka-like of his novels, is a dark work which makes yet another journey into the umbra of death. Konrad Vost, a fiftyish pharmacy clerk, inhabits a middle-sized European city distinguished only by its drab uniformity. Precision and correctness are his two distinguishing characteristics. His life is bounded by women in "the garden in which he was cultivated." The cultivators are Eva the imprisoned mother, Claire the dead wife, and Mirabelle the daughter, a child in his eyes, otherwise a prostitute. His mother murdered his father and deprived him of her maternal love. He loved and condemned her. His wife was faithless to him. He grieves obsessively for her. His daughter, a schoolgirl, deliberately offends him with her sexual laxity. His life is measured by the regularity of his visits to the exterior of the prison, the cemetery and the school, "a traveler in a small world." He is comfortable with the boredom and security of regular patterns which are indifferent and meaningless without the threat of "unwanted change." This rigidly ordered world, the product of mind, not of nature, is upset when he is seduced by his daughter's classmate, creating in him violent sensations for which he has no prepared response. "Natural" feelings are foreign to him. Shortly thereafter the women in the prison, La Violaine, riot, again an orderly world upset, and Vost volunteers to help the guards re-establish order. A victim of the battle, he awakens in the hospital. Eva, Claire and Mirabelle have escaped the categories into which he had fixed them. The rest of the novel seems to take place in some kind of dream state in which hallucinations are more telling than real events. It is a fictive world in which his frustrated imagination releases his inner self. The freedom of nature overwhelms the categorizing mind.

What is one to make of his symbolic adventures? It is difficult to say. Does the male discover that he has made females his victims and come to an awareness of their individuality, even superiority? I suspect Hawkes wants us to read the novel that way. On the other hand, readers like myself, who accept history and the traditional values of Western civilization, will be puzzled, and finally consider the novel antifeminist; the protagonist discovers that he has been repeatedly betrayed and dehumanized by women. However, in order to get to either of these choices (or others, perhaps), it is necessary to examine the frame image of the novel and to determine the character of Vost's mind and imagination.

The frame image of the novel would seem to indicate that any pattern leads to the discovery of nothingness. After Claire's funeral, Vost returns to the "empty" church, discovers finitude, the "brutally silvered fist of death." With an "impossible clarity of sight," he finds the "answer": "The obverse of the tomb of Christ." The obverse is the side turned toward the observer, the side bearing the main design. The root meaning of "obverse" is also helpful, "for always." The Cross and the Tomb are symbols of death. For Vost, "the irony of order existing only in desolation and discomfort was a satisfaction beyond imagin-

"... sections of *The Passion Artist* are among the most poignant and most powerful in Hawkes's now extensive and truly classical *oeuvre* ... to come upon rotten ribs, underground rivers, excrement!"
—*The New Republic*

"... highly recommended for sophisticated collections of contemporary fiction."
—*Library Journal*

Dr. Schwartz is a frequent contributor to these pages.

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ing." At the end of the novel, the meaning of his real and (perhaps) imagined life is realized in a final irony. Shot as he is leaving the prison, he makes one last effort to assert his identity. "I am who I am," he cries; the ironic Biblical echo is intentional. His death is the "final irony," because he discovers for himself what "it was to be nothing."

What difference, then, does any pattern make, since any pattern leads to the same end? "At dusk he knew with certainty what he had known at noon and dawn: that now he was fit to live only in the darkness . . . ." More than a little in love with death, Hawkes sees Thanatos as the non-God of a world which may or may not be. Our imaginative invention of a world which never is, was or can be is, alas, the final joke. Over everything hangs the light and shadows that tell of nothingness. The city itself proves that dreamers of palaces and holocausts have "invented nothing." The city is the home of all human experience, internal and external, and its reality denies the validity of anything one might learn from history. The degradation of the prison, where he longs to be at home, is no different from that of the city in which it "thrived." One must step out of what one ordinarily takes to be history and everything it entails in order to be open to what the imaginary Elysium has to offer. It is a totally anti-intellectual stance, so insubstantially romantic as to defy the probes of conceptualization.

In his private world (consciousness) Vost lived in time uninformed by chronology. It is in the disordering of his private world through its convergence with the public world (nature) that Vost learns the significance of chronology. (Chronology is not history.) It links unexpected events in a chain, allowing one to discover the "lessons of devastation." It is essential to cling to the fact that "every man contains his psychic pit, and that each pit is filled with slime." Nature has its plan, but consciousness does not fit into the scheme of nature. Hawkes's view is another version of the aggressive paganism of Wallace Stevens's "Sunday Morning," the best gloss on the novel I can recommend. Vost's problem is solved when he comes to understand the foolishness of morality, to know the stupidity of consciousness opposed to natural inclination, and to see the Tomb of Christ for what it is:

> The tomb in Palestine
> Is not the porch of spirits lingering.
> It is the grave of Jesus, where he lay.

His liberation, if it can be called that, comes through willed erotic union with a "courtesan inside a tomb. Or a woman in a morgue." Thanatos and Eros. "Konrad Vost knew at last the transports of that singular experience which makes every man an artist."

That the most passionate erotic unions are accomplished through fellatio is significant. "Marriage must never in any way become maternal." Sexuality must be erotic but never fruitful. The reproductive function is agony, blood and torment. "Only the woman who does not live with children retains her youth." Each person is a barren island, and for each the only pleasure is the exploration of other barren islands. Men and women are not opposites; they are both the same and opposite, "reproduction aside." The lengthy, overwritten explorations of this topic are dirges, celebrating the worship of death. The death's-head, always present in the garden, is not a morbid caution but a sign of the way to realize emo-

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles of Culture:*

The Conservative Principle

"A jaded observer of the political follies of post-Civil War America once quipped that the succession of presidents from George Washington to Ulysses Grant disproved Darwin's theory of evolutionary progression. In similar fashion, one might hazard the opinion that the line of sociologists from Max Weber to the present belies the idea of progress. From the heights attained by such 19th- and early 20th-century theorists as Weber, Herbert Spencer, Vilfredo Pareto and Emile Durkheim, sociology has descended into the depths of triviality and posturing radicalism."

—from "Can Any Good Thing Come Out of Sociology?" by James J. Thompson, Jr.

Also:
Opinions & Views—Commendables—In Focus Waste of Money—The American Proscenium Screen—Music—Correspondence—Liberal Culture—Journalism

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tional freedom and vivacity, a lesson women have generally taught men in Hawkes's fiction.

The Passion Artist presents a terrible and terrifying vision: antilife, anti-intellectual, antihistory. It is, however, a logical result of the inverted premises upon which Hawkes rests his case. It is a vision of primal horror, this lust for death as mankind waits in the garden passing the time with sexual gymnastics that dehumanize him. No conventional pagan writer has this vision in precisely the same way. One would have to be a post-Christian pagan to see as Hawkes does.

The consensus is that there is something special about his style, but no agreement about what it is. He is a professional to his fingertips. The carefully crafted sentences are evidence enough. The figurative language, except when it is merely grotesque ornament, shows a sensitivity to observed detail. I think, however, that one can begin to explain his style on the principle that there is less than meets the eye. If one gives credibility to his opaque vision, one can understand the regularity with which he misses the point. What one should keep in mind, however, is that he misses the point because he has not seen it. His writing is like the painting of a nearsighted artist who will not wear his glasses.

The fictional world of Ralph de Toledano is intelligible because there is a pattern of cause and effect and because the enduring values upon which we perceive that life can be understood are clearly stated. *Devil Take Him* deals in part with the theme of death but in a radically different way than *The Passion Artist.* Death is not the end of the protagonist's being, but only the beginning of serious religious ruminations on the state of his immortal soul. The God question, deviously pursued through the Devil question, occupies most of the reflections tenuously attached to the narrative. Paul Castelar, a good writer who might have been great, a journalist and a secret agent, leaves money in his will to subsidize the writing of his biography. Peter Minot, an indifferent writer, is picked for the job. He conducts a series of interviews, each interviewee having a different perspective on Paul's character. Notes, diaries and an unpublished autobiographical essay are also uncovered. The narrative mode is that of the thriller with ambiguous theological waves, the form used with such skill by Graham Greene. The pattern is that of the observer-secret searcher being put in a relation to an older, powerful figure who will finally have a profound effect upon the seemingly neutral observer: Ishmael/Ahab *(Moby Dick),* Marlowe/Kurtz *(Heart of Darkness),* Carraway/Gatsby *(The Great Gatsby).* His task: "Find out why he was so big on the God bit and on damnation." In contrast to Hawkes's antihistorical stance, de Toledano gives great significance to history. Paul Castelar has a history and is part of history; only by understanding that can sense be made of his ambiguities. Konrad Vost's minuscule history means nothing even after he uncovers the sum of his own secrets.

It is evident that Paul is looking for the answer to some question. Unable to love because his heart is in handcuffs, he never reaches his potential as a writer, remaining instead a spiritual wanderer. He is characterized by various friends as cruel, the victim of an undeveloped heart, of having made a pact with the Devil, and as a heretic for thinking that the key to heaven or hell is in his pocket. Peter becomes enough like Paul for others to notice the growing identification. "Paul wants to be you," one of the most perceptive friends suggests. The biography is Paul's way of freeing his soul finally. But from what?

Paul's quotation from Charles Williams provides a key. "Deep, deeper than we believe, lie the roots of sin. It is in the good that they exist; it is in the good that they thrive and send up sap and produce the black fruits of hell." Paul is sinful, not evil, searching for the certitude he identifies with priests. "But they are part of a system of certainty, whatever their personal doubts and rationalizations. They have a key which none of us has. The born-and-bred Catholic enjoys this, but the rest of you always wonder what it is he knows that you don't." Being born clear George Santayana called it. Paul writes of what the world no longer believes, "of good-in-evil or good-and-evil," that profound and mysterious mixture of hope and hopelessness Konrad Vost can never understand. Like Dante, Paul starts *"nel mezzo del cammin,"* in the middle of life's journey in a dark wood. God, the Devil, Adam, Eve, original sin are for Paul topics so ancient they need no corroborative evidence.

Part of Paul's problem is that he comes to God by way of a belief in damnation. First, he believes that he is damned; then he feels that the Devil has given up on him; then he is unable to distinguish between God and the Devil. The wood is dark indeed. In an epiphany God reaches out to him. "The void was filled . . . with exultation, and he was sure that what he had never understood, he understood now."

After having served the Devil, hearing the Good News is so startling that Paul's heresy is born. He believes that he is relieved of the anxious problems of the human condition, removed from considerations of good and evil and the fear of damnation because his salvation is assured. Certain that he is the Lord's anointed, he forgets how much he needs to remember that he is a man. Dying, Paul sees something, the identity of which Peter has been trying to figure out from the beginning. Was it the Devil who appeared to remind Paul of his existence? Was it despair? Or was it something else—that knowledge of the human condition the simple have which explains why God loves and forgives us? "It may be that in writing your book, in digging through the achievement and the trash of Paul's life, you really had another assignment—to find Paul's soul and return it to him. It may be that until you do, *you* will be Paul Castelar, not

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Peter Minot." There are serious theological implications in all this which de Toledano has chosen not to face, depending instead upon instinct which comes pretty close to superstition.

The design for the novel is clever; the structure provides appropriate opportunities for Peter Minot to recreate the past of the protagonist. de Toledano's essential problem as a novelist is that he is self-conscious as the gifted amateur is, watching himself write, trying hard to be professional. Tired witticisms and tiresome obscenities are presented as if they were just discovered. When given a choice, he always tells rather than shows. Hence, *Devil Take Him* is a very talky book. I have no objection to talk, of course, but talk is tiresome when it substitutes for the dramatic action which gives energy to the orchestration of platitudes which literature is. He is an excellent observant reporter trying to be a novelist. His devices are almost reportorial, as if the dogma of induction is a substitute for the creation of imaginative structures. None of the characters are believably dimensional in the way that is important to the creative intuition. Paul is impossible, and Peter is a bore. They talk and act because the author is pulling the strings.

Concepts, not percepts, interest de Toledano. His thrust is solely ideological. The novel will be of interest only to the reader who enjoys the play of ideas reflected off a flat surface. Some personal passion urged de Toledano to write this book. What it is, however, comes through only obliquely in Part II, the autobiography Paul tells us he will never write. The use of the first person in that section encouraged me to suspect that a better novel was lurking in the otherwise mannered structure de Toledano chose to use.

In reviewing these two novels, I find myself in an odd situation. The gifted professional has nothing to say to me. The amateur has something I think I would like to hear but he has not found a way of saying it. □

Boring from Within*

Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett: *POPism: The Warhol 60's;* Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; New York.

by Gordon M. Pradl

A few years back Andy Warhol allowed the Museum of American Folk Art in New York City to exhibit his extensive collection of Americana. Upon entering the museum, viewers discovered that Warhol had dictated that his goods be strewn about, as though hurriedly thrown in the corner of someone's attic. Here a stack of primitive paintings lined up against the wall; there a pile of quilts, folded up to conceal their workmanship and design; on a shelf pieces of pottery jumbled together; in the middle of the floor a carousel horse turned on its side—wherever one looked, one confronted some crowded grouping, whether baskets jammed one into another or hooked rugs tightly rolled up together. All the pleasure of responding to individual works of art had suddenly disappeared.

In all likelihood, it was meant to frustrate our expectations in such a way as to make a grand statement about our hypocrisies as museum-goers. How foolish—it seemed to say—to have held such a value system that we would actually desire a careful look at aged artifacts. What wretched artistic sensibilities we must all have. We now can see, thanks to Mr. Warhol's exhibit's bold and contemptuous declaration, that it's only so much junk that we have been admiring all along. Imagine—our ideals of refined taste and the sanctity of the individual creator and responder have merely been illusions forced on us by those up tight and elitist cultural brokers of the past. At last we are all free to splash our own cans of paint against the sprawling canvas of life.

Rubbish. We must not acquiesce to the relativistic position that lets the chic avant-garde voices of liberal culture justify any outrage. We must reassert the mystery of art and its centrality to shaping and refining our responses to experience. We must not allow defeatist views to be forced upon us, views that claim that "significant form" inspired by the muse is nothing more than the garbled sounds a tape recorder plays back after having inadvertently been left running at someone's cocktail party.

The parade of characters and events that comprise *POPism,* Warhol's new autobiographical account of the 60's, represents yet another assault on decency and normal values. Posing as the innocent with his disarmingly chatty style, Warhol gradually reveals his saprophytic relationship to the commercial culture he pretends to mock. "Value" in art is reduced exclusively to monetary terms and the hype of the PR man: "So you need a good gallery so the 'ruling class' will notice you and spread enough confidence in your future so collectors will buy you, whether for five hundred dollars or fifty thousand. No matter how good you are, if you're not promoted right, you won't be one of those remembered names." No pretense here; it's all out on the table as Warhol leads us on yet another journey of self-promotion.

Popism, of course, is no more than Warhol's serious refusal to take anything seriously. Reaching back instinctively to his roots as a commercial artist, Warhol seeks, with the aid of the literal

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*The reviewer will not be offended by those readers who prefer to skip to the final paragraph and thus get immediately to the heart of the matter.

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camera and the assemblyline silkscreen, to cast the shadows of his plastic, repeatable images over the whole façade of the spineless art world. The icons that he has produced, from "money" to "Marilyn Monroe," have indeed proved to be significant commentaries on our present age, yet the direction toward which these icons point is a nihilistic, disposable lifestyle, one which undercuts any sense of deliberate control and discrimination that might be achieved through the creation of the art object itself. In this complete inversion of the traditional struggles and patterns of art, the key emotions are boredom and detachment, not involvement and commitment: "I like boring things . . . because the more you look at the same exact thing, the more the meaning goes away, and the better and emptier you feel." Chasing after the cheap and the mundane, such art (really an anti-art) promises liberation; instead, it further erodes the confidence of the dominant culture in its own purposes, in its ability to trust in the social fabric that holds us together. Pop's disdain for respectability ends by fostering a simulated "mass" culture for the monied elite, not an elite culture for the masses.

But perhaps what is most disturbing finally about the canonizing of Warhol, his lifestyle and works, is that so few people in the know are genuinely offended. In one sense the vitality of the dominant culture can be judged by the extent to which it entertains counterstatements to its ethos without forgetting that its identity is in fact separate from that of the counterculture. In contemporary times, however, the center itself does not seem to be holding; indeed, we seem unable even to locate or recognize the center anymore because in its rush to set trends, rather than render judgments, the dominant culture has been consumed by its own excesses. Anyone nowadays is a candidate for celebrity status—only talent appears to disqualify one. And so Warhol's boredom becomes a tenant of our reality, not a frantic call for setting our own house in order.

The potentially useful function of Warhol's art thus loses its sting, for in swallowing him up, we have made his conventions our own. And nowhere is this more evident than in the actual tone of *POPism* itself. Warhol's voice with its soothing cadences (until you realize the underlying pornographic intent) is the self-assured voice of the insider who already belongs, not the shrill and shocking voice of those old counterculture outsiders such as Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman (though, of course, Warhol has always tongue-in-cheek claimed to be a fixture of mainstream culture). Indeed, Warhol himself all-too-accurately expresses how all-pervasive the Pop stance toward modern American culture is when he characterizes the current generation in the concluding lines of his book: "Pop wasn't an issue or an option for this new wave: it was all they'd ever known."

"It's irrelevant to accuse him of being empty or amoral . . ."
—*Newsweek*

There is, however, one way to defend yourself against Warhol and his gang: by fighting Pop with Pop. Since Warhol says Pop is "doing the easiest thing," the obvious honorable and frugal way out of having to read Warhol's tedious, narcissistic sweet nothings (although those who earn their keep off of the cultural analysis business will need to keep abreast of Warhol's "insights" into the events and artifacts of the junkpile) is to invest in Campbell's soup. At current prices, for the cost of a copy of *POPism* you should be able to buy almost 36 cans, a much healthier investment for your dollar—and steaming off and saving the labels might eventually lead to your own work of art. □

Gothic Feminism

Marilyn French: *The Bleeding Heart;* Summit Books; New York.

by Becki Klute

In her first novel, Ms. French presented a woman who had been pushed to the very brink of insanity by the cruel, inhumane male world. This time she gives us Dolores Durer, a rather successful academician in spite of the cruel, inhumane male world. Dolores, her success and modest fame notwithstanding, perceives that women are persecuted, suffocated, oppressed, repressed, used, abused, subjugated, tyrannized by men. She sees evidence of this appalling condition everywhere she looks, both in the United States and in England, where she is on sabbatical.

Having trudged through a disastrous marriage and a series of unsatisfactory lovers, Dolores has been celibate for some years when she meets Victor on a train from London to Oxford. He enters the compartment where she sits, and she is piqued that her "space" has been invaded. But their eyes lock; the chemistry starts working, some strange magnetism is in the air. Neither speaks; after their arrival in Oxford he carries her luggage to her flat. Once inside, "they pressed their bodies together until they felt like a single unit melted together by the heat they generated." (Ms. French has an assured career writing gothic romances when she's through with feminist politics.) But Dolores is angry with Victor by the time he leaves her apartment that night: she feels that he has "canceled" her. Thus, the pattern

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of their relationship is formed: their sex life is great, their ideologies are poles apart.

Dolores Durer is the original bleeding heart of the title: her heart bleeds for the unfortunates of the world as well as for herself. She worries about pollution, women, crime, women, drugs, women, capitalist corruption and women. The subject of her sabbatical research is the suffering of women. For Dolores, reality can be seen or interpreted only in terms of its effect on women. And reality affects women only in negative ways. Whatever is wrong with the world is the fault of men. Dolores's eldest daughter committed suicide, her son is an itinerant, penniless musician, her youngest daughter lives in a lesbian commune, and it's all the fault of Anthony, her former husband who also committed suicide. Corporations run by men create industrial slaves and pollution, governments run by men make women slaves, allow poverty to exist, etc., etc., *ad nauseam.*

Victor is a successful cog in the corporate machine, a representative of the male power structure—in other words, everything Dolores despises. His marriage, too, has been dismal, although in a different fashion. His wife was the perfect mate in every way, but after several years she angrily revealed that she had been unhappy all along. Her lack of confidence in her ability to support herself (even with a college degree) forced her to return to Victor. Life continued. Twenty years later, upon her discovery of his infidelity, she leaves in a fit of rage, has a terrible car accident and is permanently crippled.

There is no distance between Marilyn French and Dolores Durer. Reviewers have speculated that Ms. French writes autobiographical novels, but whether the events themselves are autobiographical hardly matters; French has written her novel only to express her own opinion about the condition of women throughout the ages. Dolores Durer *is* Marilyn French in one—the only—important aspect: ideology. It's a simple view of life, even simplistic: four legs good, two legs bad—women good, men bad. Dolores Durer, alias Marilyn French, lives in a neat little black-and-white world. Everything fits into its own tidy little box; her only problem is an occasional difficulty in deciding in which box someone or something belongs. For instance, the renowned cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris is breathtaking, and from her position as an arty intellectual she would classify it as good. But it was built by men, and is so imposing that it intimidates humans, so it must be bad. There's no room for gray, and even less for gray matter, in such a black-and-white life. None of French's characters is permitted to have emotions or to act in a way that does not fit the feminist perception of humanity. Victor, as a part of *man*kind, must be condemned at any cost. And that price turns out to be very high, as Dolores learns that she cannot change the world that has existed for millennia. Her only alternative, given her rigid worldview, is to separate herself from it. Although Victor decides to leave his wife and remain true to Dolores, she will not accept it. She knows in every fiber of her being that he will never really change, that he will eventually try to put her into the same "pumpkin shell" where he kept his wife.

Generalization is the rule, not the exception, in French's feminist manual: "men always . . ." "women would never . . ." Some critics have chastised her for being too vituperative; they like prescriptions for lifestyles to be more polite. These reviewers don't disagree with her; they only wish she had been a little less strident—which makes them even less honest than French. She, at least, is honest in her hatred, if nothing else: she does, indeed, loathe men, and the world she believes they have created. She can admit no approval of anything male: "I cannot give an inch." And that very statement exposes the lie that French is trying to promulgate: she *must* be right, no matter what. Even if the facts of a given situation prove that a man is being kind, fair and understanding and a woman is being unreasonable, mean and obtuse, French is forced by her inflexibility to twist and manipulate those facts and convince herself that the man has forced the woman to behave that way. This paradox is apparent throughout the novel: Victor listens to Dolores, offers his views, repents of all his chauvinistic sins, tries to understand her point of view. Dolores does nothing of the kind: she proclaims her ideology as the only valid one and Victor must either agree and conform or be despised. He gives all of himself that he can—she cannot give an inch.

Somewhere along the line, French lost track of the reality of being human; at some point she began looking for victims and oppressors. One gets the feeling that it's easier for her to explain things that way; the complexities of life are too frustrating. Thus she doesn't have to face the fact that people, both male and female, constantly interact in ways that both hurt and heal one another. Bonds and disparities between the sexes have plagued mankind (personkind?) for centuries. By the mid-20th century women had, to a large extent, been released from their biological imperatives, which caused untold confusion in the cultural arena. Despite any technical changes or cultural upheavals, however, many, even most, women seem to opt for some version of the traditional feminine role. Those who choose to march to a different drummer find the going rough, "salmon swimming upstream" according to French. What she ignores is that men or women whose lives or beliefs reject the prevailing norms and traditions have *always* had to "swim upstream," from Socrates to Galileo to Martin Luther to Susan B. Anthony. Initial rejection of new, untried notions is society's way of testing the value of a novel concept for life. Like the new kid on the block, it must be proved worthy of acceptance; if it is valid it will survive; if not, it will fade away like any other fad or fashion.

Ms. French does not like such facts,

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but she offers no real alternative. Her only notion of what to do is a vague conviction that women ought to run the world. She will not concede that women, too, are subject to human emotions like greed or envy; there is, in her eyes, no wickedness in womankind. Whatever evidence there may be of such transgressions French blames on the male power structure to which women must accommodate themselves. Men are the only corrupters—this is the point French hammers at with all the delicacy of a wrecking ball. Anyone who disagrees with her cannot "see." She, of course, "sees" clearly—far beyond equal job opportunities or egalitarian marriages, down to the core of the quintessential man-woman relationship. She fiercely denies the very substance of the notion of relationship itself, the instinctive, timeless trade-offs for power and privileges in which sometimes one has the advantage, sometimes the other. For her, only half of humanity ever suffers. □

Squanto the Eurocentric or the Great Liberal Textbook Muddle

Frances FitzGerald: *America Revised;* Atlantic-Little, Brown & Co.; Boston, Toronto.

by Alan J. Levine

Frances FitzGerald's *America Revised* claims to be a study of the treatment of American history in 20th-century textbooks. Unfortunately, FitzGerald's ignorance of American history make this book more a study in confusion, ideological blinkers and contradictions than anything else. FitzGerald frequently misrepresents the nature of the books she discusses and delivers tendentious judgments based on a lack of learning, or just the projection of current attitudes about the past.

The basic thesis of *America Revised* is that during the 20th century, textbooks have largely failed to present a consistent or truthful picture of American history, while their ability to interest or attract children has declined. Instead of basing themselves on a coherent—much less correct—historical view of our society, textbooks have bounced back and forth under the influence of often-silly pressure groups and a relatively few states and school districts with disproportionate control over the textbook market. In general, textbooks presented a fashionable liberal view in the 1930's, shifted to the right in the 1940's under pressure from the National Association of Manufacturers, became extremely conservative and downright chauvinistic in the 1950's, hurtled to the left in the 1960's and, more recently, have moved again to the right under pressure from the "back-to-basics" movement.

In fact, it is a bit difficult to find justification for this view. Since the 1930's both the historical and teaching professions have been dominated by liberals. (FitzGerald herself cites resolutions which indicate that the National Education Association has been dominated by liberals at least since the early 20th century; moreover, since the 1960's, the N.E.A. has openly denigrated the importance of scholarship, viewing history and social studies as an instrument for social change.) Though textbook writers are rarely conscious propagandists, this liberal domination has been reflected in the nature of the textbooks that have been published. Although neither conservatives nor the new left have ever made much of a dent in the textbook market, marketing considerations and prudence have occasionally restrained the free expression of views in textbooks. Until recently, for example, no one could have sold a textbook in the South which realistically depicted racial matters. Moreover, the viewpoint of liberals has shifted. However, it would be erroneous to consider the textbook business as simply an ideological battlefield.

It should also be noted that *America Revised* is far from being as all-embracing in its coverage as it pretends to be. Thomas A. Bailey's popular textbook, which was used in New York City high schools for at least a decade, is not listed or mentioned at all. This, as an example, should not be surprising, since Bailey's work does not fit many of the stereotypes FitzGerald tries to construct.

In evaluating the viewpoints expressed in textbooks, FitzGerald is often hopelessly at sea. She confuses populism with the progressive movement, although they were separate developments with different attitudes and social bases. She describes Robert LaFollette as a populist, while in fact he was a progressive. She refers to the "supposed 'missile gap' of the early Kennedy era," although the missile-gap issue was really a phenomenon of the last years of the Eisenhower administration. We are told that in 1913 the textbook writer Willis Mason West "faced the fact" that in the late 19th century "great multitudes were worse off than any considerable portion of society in earlier times," but this is not a fact at all. In one place FitzGerald approvingly cites Richard Hofstadter's dubious theory that the progressives were really "thorough-going reactionaries" beneath the skin, motivated by status envy rather than reforming zeal. Yet, elsewhere she implies that they were far more radical than they appeared, claiming that their goal "was not just to purge society of corruption but to liberate it from the dominion of the past—to put an end to the respect for established tradition and to the Victorian culture of filial piety,

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authoritarianism and class distortion." This suggests a rather bizarre view of the Victorian Age—the freest era in the history of the world—and confuses the aims of Victorian gentlemen like Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and Robert LaFollette with the position, or rather the pose, of the new left of the 1960's.

The worst muddles in FitzGerald's work appear in her treatment of the alleged shifts in viewpoint of textbooks from the 1940's to the 1960's. She claims that in the 1940's a sudden right-wing blitz terrorized or converted textbook writers into becoming conservative: "By 1950 or so the texts had become reflections of the National Association of Manufacturers' viewpoint." The resulting texts, we are told, portrayed Americans as perfect, were chauvinistic, tended to "side with the Pinkertons against the labor radicals," expressed a "morbid" fear of communism while portraying the United States as surrounded by enemies, and erroneously represented American values and political institutions as essentially unchanged since the time of the Revolution.

Far from becoming expressions of conservatism, textbooks that were recognizably conservative in their treatment of recent American history have always been extremely difficult to find. It is true that a certain shift of outlook occurred in the 1940's; external threats, World War II, the Cold War and postwar prosperity tended to push even committed liberals into a relatively non-liberal mood. But a text that really sided with the Pinkertons would be hard to find and even harder to sell. One would not know, from reading *America Revised,* that a substantial number of American scholars of varying ideologies, including Daniel Boorstin, Louis Hartz, Samuel Eliot Morison, Seymour Martin Lipset and David Potter, did argue that since the 18th century the American people have been characterized by a high degree of consensus on basic values. And it is a fact that the American political system has changed remarkably little in two hundred years; ours is now the second-oldest continuous government in the world.

While the textbooks of the 1950's may have had the bad taste (by FitzGerald's standards) to be anticommunist, they were hardly as hysterical as she suggests. Far from portraying America as alone in a world of enemies, they expressed a contemporary mood that regarded communist regimes as the sole villains of an otherwise peaceful and friendly world. They presented a complacent and indulgent view of Latin America and the ex-colonial countries. FitzGerald accuses two textbook authors, Bragdon and McCutcher, of endorsing Senator Joe McCarthy's charges as true. But the quotes she cites merely point out, albeit in a slightly breathless manner, the incontestable fact that Communist Party members had spied for the Soviets.

In treating the following era, FitzGerald is, if anything, even more confused, although she musters enough honesty to criticize some of the more absurd results of the fads in textbook writing which faithfully reflect the liberals' shifts of viewpoint. A belated interest in the history of American blacks led to a virtual obsession with racial conflict and a view that splintered American society into, at best, a patchwork of contending ethnic groups. There was a movement to rewrite textbooks to conform with the latest ideological emphasis on blacks, other "minority groups" and women. Moreover, the portrayal of such groups was complicated by the ideologues' inability to decide whether the emphasis should be on the oppression and outrages these groups had suffered, or on positive images to reinforce their morale, depicting them in a favorable light. FitzGerald has some fun with some of the guidelines publishers have imposed on writers: "the most interesting thing about them is the rather substantial modifications they make in the English language," particularly in order to conform to feminist demands. Holt, Rinehart & Winston urges its writers to avoid the phrase "the founding fathers," and wants men to be shown cooking, sewing and doing housework—and not ineptly. Houghton Mifflin deplores the use of female pronouns in referring to boats, and apparently deems Tom Paine a dangerous sexist. Writers should not use phrases such as "these are the times that try men's souls."

As she points out, attempts to accommodate the demands of every possible minority proved impossible. A rather innocuous and *favorable* reference to Squanto, an Indian who befriended the Plymouth colonists, brought loud objections from a "Council on Interracial Books for Children." They complained that it was "Eurocentric" to characterize Indians as friendly or unfriendly.

"... a fascinating and important book."
—*Newsweek*

"She has used her sources with telling effect and left us the wiser for her efforts."
—*New York Review of Books*

"These internal confusions do not indicate that Miss FitzGerald's brain was fuddled..."
—*New York Times Book Review*

"... her arguments ... are carefully researched and compellingly conveyed."
—*Publishers Weekly*

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Squanto was considered a fishy character, if not a traitor: "true Native American heroes are those who fought to preserve and protect their people's freedom and land." Although FitzGerald fails to notice the erroneous assumption that Indians constituted a single nation or people, she has sense enough to see that American history cannot be taught by attempting to show the viewpoint of every real or alleged group. However, she is handicapped by her inability to decide between two false descriptions of America: one, that it is a "white, middle-class society"; the other, that it is "multiracial and multicultural." As is often the case with FitzGerald, there is confusion even in her categories; a society could be "middle class" *and* "multiracial and multicultural."

In discussing recent problems and attacking the "back-to-basics" movement, FitzGerald simply ignores reality. She flatly denies that there is any "hard evidence" that the ability of American children to read and write and understand mathematics has declined. It is, of course, a well-known fact that standard test scores have been declining for over a decade and a half. But even if this "hard evidence" could somehow be written off, any college or high-school teacher would testify to the increasing unpreparedness of his students. Though the "back-to-basics" advocates may not have all the right solutions, their views cannot be dismissed as "conservative, pessimistic, nostalgic," or as "an emotional quest for certainty in an uncertain world," which she links to an apparently sinister desire to preserve middle-class standards and values. It is no accident that, as she notes without comprehension, the amount of illustration in textbooks is far greater today than in the 1950's. The proportion of pictures to text has been increased in a typically misguided attempt to compensate for the students' declining ability to read. That is a silly way to cope with the problem. Almost as silly, in fact, as *America Revised.* □

The Mysteries of Syntax & Punctuation

Cyrus Colter: *Night Studies;* The Swallow Press; Chicago.

by Gary S. Vasilash

A few years ago, administrators and professors at institutions of higher learning were put under scrutiny by the media. "Why can't Johnny read; why can't Jane write?" were the questions. Was it true that functional illiterates were reposing within the ivy-covered walls? Naturally, public attention has been diverted elsewhere; the Naderites are now busy attacking college entrance examinations. It's interesting to note, however, that during 1975-76 the administrators and professors were complaining that college entrance requirements were becoming too lenient, that standards should be raised, not lowered. Another comment often heard from these same people: too much time was being spent by students in front of television sets and not enough time at studies.

During that period, I entered graduate school, giving serious thought to helping man the ramparts against the barbarian hordes that were laying waste to English departments across the land. One of the required courses for my studies was the teaching of freshman composition. During one class session, the professor confessed that he often graded compositions on Sunday nights while watching *The Sonny and Cher Show.* Unbelievable as it may seem, the quality of some of those compositions could drive stronger men to do much worse. The students were (and probably are) unable to write because they watched too much TV; the professor was unable to grade without the soporific escape of the screen.

Cyrus Colter, author of *Night Studies,* has, according to the dust jacket of that novel, "recently retired as professor emeritus at Northwestern University, where he held the Chester D. Tripp Distinguished Chair in the Humanities." The novel took some six years to get into print. Taking Mr. Colter's former employment and the time frame into account, I cannot help but wonder if he was watching a TV variety show during the composition of *Night Studies* or, what is more likely, the television presentation of *Roots.* That is, the first thing one notices about the book is that it is poorly written. Consider the opening:

> *End and beginning.* The Ray Charles concert was over though it had been —and still was to be—a strange, bizarre evening. It was the girl—Griselda. For the last two hours, throughout most of the music, Marvin had sat so utterly distracted over her he hardly knew where he was. It was her face, her strange, her holy face—so tinted, odd, and ravishing, yet delicately pale one moment, so softly darker the next.

Notice how strange and odd everything

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"... well worth reading for its scope, depth of understanding, and effort to realize the ways in which blacks and whites learn to deal with their common humanity."
—*Publishers Weekly*

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is. Make your way across the syntax without becoming too distracted by the short circuits of modifiers and take account of the interesting color changes of Griselda Graves's "holy face." They play a key role in this novel.

Another important character is Mary Dee Adkins, a beautiful 23-year old. A typical scene illustrates how adorable she is and how atrociously things are described: Ms. Adkins is in a Chicago snowstorm, looking out the window of her "flashy—new—little red Datsun 1200." Mr. Colter writes: "Although in the maelstrom of snow her face seemed alien, indistinct, remote—it was also partially obscured by the fierce hood of the great fur parka she wore—it could readily be recognized by almost anyone who had ever seen it before as that of Mary Dee Adkins." How can an obscured face that's alien and all the rest be readily recognized? But the reader who has made it to page 123 is already too numbed to spend much time on that question. After all, just five pages before, Griselda has kissed the base of the Picasso sculpture in Chicago and told a passer-by, "It may someday lead us." And there are still over 650 pages to go.

Mr. Colter has a great liking for dashes. He probably uses more of them than anyone this side of the 19th-century romantic poets. And dashes aren't the only thing he has taken from that period. For example, his characters owe something to Dickens, at least with regard to their names: John Calvin Knight for a Martin Luther King type; Hungerford for a character hungry for power (remember Gradgrind in *Hard Times?);* Gideon for a so-called street poet, and so on.

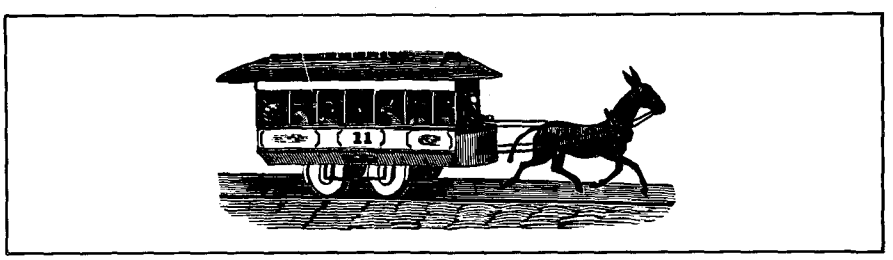
The book is also something of a 19th-century melodrama, which goes back to a relationship with 20th-century television. The novel centers around Knight, leader of an organization called the Black Peoples Congress, a black nationalist group. Although the action primarily takes place in the 70's, there are poorly contrived flashbacks that detail the agonies that Knight's ancestors underwent. Flashbacks often take place when Knight is in his hospital bed brooding. (He has been shot by some disgruntled blacks, and the mystery of the crime is solved by Gideon, a junkie, who is almost incapable of any forward locomotion other than a stumble.) He broods, then there is an ellipsis and a line such as: "But in Africa . . . " (author's punctuation), then back we go 200 years. In some cases, Knight's flashbacks occur from one paragraph to the next, or there is a row of stars separating the copy, or a fresh chapter. It's both inconsistent and clumsy, but it would work on television since the viewer couldn't see the layout. It *is* a problem for the reader.

Making things more complex is the fact that interspersed with Knight's past and present are the stories of Griselda Graves and Mary Dee Adkins. Griselda is apparently Caucasian. She gets a "bizarre notion" and leaves her lover in San Francisco to go to Chicago and join up with the Black Peoples Congress. Being white, she dons an Afro wig so she will be accepted by the black nationalists. But the reader knows better: Griselda's father's maternal grandmother was black, which explains all of her strange desires and urges. She is so well accepted by Knight that she gets to know him quite well while she's wearing nothing but her Afro wig—which eventually causes problems for the black leader. All this time, Griselda is being chased by Marvin, a champion typist who has a head shaped like a potato and who is usually either crying or salivating.

Mary Dee, an art student in Paris, is involved with Phillip Morgan Wilcox of Philadelphia (his father, naturally, is a member of the Harvard Board of Overseers) when we first meet her. Eventually they split: Phillip's parents would not allow their son to marry a black woman; they would cut off his allowance if he did. The values suggested by the book become apparent when Phillip asks Mary Dee to become his mistress in Paris and to forego a marriage ceremony. She thinks she would, except that "all the historical implications" of their respective pigments get in the way: if he were black, she thinks, such a relationship would be okay. Once she breaks off with Phillip she forms "a bitter, implacable hatred for Phillip's parents and all their kind" and joins the Black Peoples Congress.

Just as the reader knows Griselda has black blood, it is also painfully obvious that the mysterious black man that Mary Dee sees in Paris early in the book is Knight, and that it is only a matter of time until they meet. This is the stuff of which TV dramas are made: inexorable drives and passions that lead our hero and heroines to their ends. After all, there's not much time to develop characters during a 30-minute program or even a full-blown "mini-series." *Night Studies* has 774 pages to develop characters, but it's an opportunity not taken.

But even if the problems of the structure and characterization are overlooked and the novel is considered as a sociopolitical statement about the relationship between blacks and whites in the U.S., the book is a failure; no such message is spelled out. True, the inhumanities of the slave trade are put forth, but the reader could read of them



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in *Black Cargoes—A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade* by Mannix and Cowley, just as Mr. Colter did. And similar well-written works provide factual, biographical details on the other historical events Mr. Colter covers.

When the near-contemporary situation is dealt with, things are quite vague: the flashbacks are based on a sort of history, but Mr. Colter doesn't seem to know what direction to take in the present, what point to make. So he sets up an assortment of mannequins that talk primarily about "blackness." There is an organization, so they talk about holding a meeting at which blackness will be discussed. Finally, more than 600 pages into the novel, the meeting is held. And there they talk about blackness. These "political" characters barely *do* anything. The only positive action that I noted was that they get one woman a job. But usually they just talk. Talk is so important that Ornette Hungerford, a college graduate and insurance salesman, "loved to affect ungrammatical street talk" when he set forth. It makes him sound more dedicated, I suppose.

Nothing is accomplished. There is no point. Murders, sex, underhanded dealings and suicides keep the motion going forward in the novel. The reader has to be given some incentive to keep going, and there's nothing like a little blood or skin to keep the pages turning. So one of the main characters jumps off the Golden Gate Bridge; another breaks off her marriage arrangements and runs off to Paris where she marries a Frenchman; and the third ends up exiled in a motel in Georgia with his head shaved. I hope that doesn't spoil the novel for anyone, but I don't think that's possible. The book stands on its own merits. And pity the student who picks up *Night Studies* and takes it as a prose model. He will no doubt find that his hours would have been as well spent in front of a TV screen—unless his professor is busy watching one. □

Blind Insight

Milton Viorst: *Fire in the Streets;* Simon & Schuster; New York.

by William E. Cage

There are two types of modern liberals. One type is truly a dictator, who believes that his opinions, values and perspective are those which everyone should have. He naturally turns to government to impose his ideas upon society if his fellow citizens should be so shortsighted as not to agree with him. Using government as society's coercive agent has always been the easy way to convince unbelievers. The other type of modern liberal is truly a liberal, one who believes that each man should be free to use or abuse his own God-given talents as he sees fit. But this type of liberal has a blind spot: he thinks that people can be given freedom by government. He fails to see that, *in every instance,* government is prone to coerce. It is, by its nature, an institution uneasy with individual liberty. The liberal with this blind spot toward government does not question whether government can in fact do anything to further the cause of liberty. This liberal is primarily concerned with getting the levers of control into his hands so that government will perform as *he* desires.

Milton Viorst seems to be one of those blind-spot liberals. His new work, *Fire in the Streets,* was purportedly written as a re-creation of the decade of the 1960's. Viorst focuses on 14 people and the events surrounding them to describe those turbulent years. The 14 people are simply the starting point for the author, and they are mostly given only superficial attention. The events of the 60's are treated in somewhat more detail but even they are only of peripheral importance for the main theme of *Fire in the Streets.* The primary thrust of this book is not concerned with events or people but rather with the turn to government to solve "social" problems. The book is interesting and important for several reasons, none of which was probably intended by Viorst. *Fire in the Streets,* actually, is an education in the way a (modern) liberal views social movements. It is a step-by-step accounting of how a concern with a social issue becomes politicized, of how government becomes involved. It is a confirmation of the conservative belief that government is a self-serving institution and that elected officials and bureaucrats alike really have the public weal quite far down on their list of motivational factors.

The book will take the reader back to the headlines of the civil-rights movement and Vietnam protests, but you will come away from those headlines with at least some awareness of how the liberal mind developed during those years. This reviewer was impressed with the naiveté, even the innocence, with which the civil-rights leaders and war protesters "discovered" how thin—and how precious—our veneer of civilization is. As they mounted civil demonstrations, even on the small scale of sit-ins, they found that people were willing to make concessions just to avoid the threat of violence, to say nothing of violence itself. And as their "education" continued, those who brought fire to the streets found that there was an even easier way of accomplishing their ends—enlist government, the social institution of threatened violence. The problems encountered by the civil-rights movement in getting Uncle Sam on its side had little to do with "states' rights" or any other high-blown idea of intergovernmental rela-

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tions. Those problems arose because few people in government offices—elected, appointed or hired—saw anything in the civil-rights movement which would be of advantage to their careers, should they become involved. The first crack in the hear-nothing-do-nothing shell of Washington came from an election campaign rather than from someone enforcing existing laws regarding civil rights. Only when votes counted could the civil-rights and war-protest movements get the ear of the bureaucracy and officialdom situated on the Potomac. There is possibly a lesson here for historians interested in the Vietnam era in particular and in the idea of civilian support for military ventures generally. It is not altogether clear that the Vietnam conflict was as unpopular as contemporary thought believes. It is arguable that civilian support for the Asian campaign diminished because of the *violence*—threatened or actual—of the protests and *not* because of the *logic or reason* behind the protests. Equally, it could be argued that civilian support for military ventures may be *over*estimated because of the implied threat of violence in government actions which could be taken against those who speak openly in resistance to war.

While *Fire in the Streets* is an education in liberal thinking, it also brings to light the flaw in the liberal approach. That flaw is that government is simply an inappropriate vehicle to use to solve problems which require voluntary cooperation if there is to be any real solution. This reviewer has lived many years in the South, which was the starting point for much of the civil-rights movement. The racial problems are still very much with us, in the South and elsewhere. It is true that these problems have changed, but the changes are not necessarily for the better. In turning to government for solutions (politicizing the issues), there could never be any outcome that was truly a solution. In civil rights, of course, governments at the state and local levels were perpetuators of the difficulties. Simply getting the repressive laws off the books—getting government *out* of the problem—would have been an excellent start. But to think that racial harmony could ever be attained by *coercing* private citizens to work or associate together is to mistake something fundamental about human nature. The end result is that minority groups have a peculiar idea of "rights" and what will come of possessing those rights. Unquestionably, some opportunities have been opened to blacks that the old state and local laws would not have allowed. However, resistance to true advancement on the part of minorities is very much present *because* those minorities are widely perceived to possess special privileges. It is in my self-interest to hire and promote the person best qualified for a job regardless of his race, and that economic incentive will do wonders to promote economic *and* social opportunity. When a person is *forced* to do something, even if it is in his own self-interest, there very quickly appears a stubbornness, a resistance to cooperating in any substantive way. The result is one of frustration for everyone and disappointment for minorities who thought that opportunity was to be theirs in fact. In addition to the frustrations and disappointments, the use of government coercion to force the issue has postponed true integration of society for years. The point is that the modern liberal does not yet realize that government is, by its very nature, ineffective in dealing with such problems and that a continuing use of government in such situations will only lead to more frustration, disappointment and delay in arriving at valid solutions.

Fire in the Streets is an education in the liberal perspective, as described above. It is also a prick to the conscience because Viorst brings to the reader the reality of the problems which gave rise to the civil-rights movement. Few whites have considered how they would react to a sheriff standing by while they were being beaten. So, while *Fire* is evidence of how inappropriate it is to use government coercion to solve social problems, it is also a reminder that there is no such thing as "benign neglect" when it comes to the conditions in which others are living. We have a responsibility to our fellow man, not to march in the streets, but rather to conduct our own affairs in a just and upright manner. We know that injustice will never be eradicated, but we're not even moving in the right direction when we stand idly by and allow government's coercive powers to perpetuate social problems.

However, *Fire in the Streets* is, at the very least, an educational volume. It is not a history of a decade or biographical sketches of the people Viorst has interviewed. It is not a serious chronology of the civil-rights or protest movements, although it does have some claim to being an intellectual history of the liberal perspective in the 1960's. The main theme of *Fire* is rather a practical lesson. It is an account of the folly of trying to use coercive means to solve social problems. This book should serve as a reminder to student and businessman alike that asking for help from Uncle in Washington is the easy way out, but it is really no way out at all. Politics is a destructive and divisive force. It takes a lot of effort—energy, thought, planning and learning—to create, to evolve genuine solutions to serious problems. And while not meaning to detract from the seriousness of the movements, nor from the dedication of the demonstrators, it has to be observed that anyone can march. □

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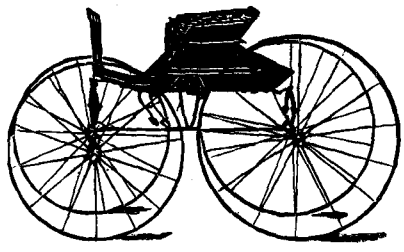
Explorations in Materialist Metaphysics

Vladislav Krasnov: *Solzhenitsyn and Dostoevsky: A Study in the Polyphonic Novel;* University of Georgia Press; Athens, Georgia.

by Juliana Geran Pilon

To call a work of fiction a symphony in prose is to risk pathos. Unless, perhaps, one happens to be referring to Dostoyevsky and Solzhenitsyn, two giants of Russian literature whose sensitivity to human suffering is equaled only by their astute knowledge of the architecture and harmony of plot and drama. And just as unraveling the subtle tapestry of a fugue enriches the listener's delectation, so analyzing symbols and subplots brings a novel into focus, heightening its significance. But just as a suite whose crescendos may appeal universally will not be fully appreciated without an understanding of its local leitmotifs, so even the greatest literature is of necessity set in contingent—hence to some extent esoteric—time and place. It is preferable, therefore, that a book on Russian literature be written by a Russian and, in the case of Solzhenitsyn, by someone who appreciates both the art and the philosophical underpinnings of Soviet dissent. Vladislav Krasnov, a former Radio Moscow correspondent who defected to the West over a decade and a half ago, presently a professor of Russian literature at the Monterey Institute of Foreign Studies and a fellow at the Hoover Institution, is well qualified for his project. His book does not disappoint: Krasnov offers the English-speaking public a painstaking, interesting comparison between the works of Solzhenitsyn and those of his formidable predecessor, Dostoyevsky. Despite its impeccable scholarship, the study presents its evidence in elegant and clearly argued language, demonstrating Solzhenitsyn's unquestionable debt to the genius who gave us the Karamazovs, the artist who understood the main reasons—political and, ultimately, psychological—for Russia's eventual collapse into the hands of "the possessed." Far from detracting from the spontaneity of Solzhenitsyn's works, Krasnov's study only enhances it. For one cannot but marvel, by appreciating the complexity of motifs and symbols, at the grace with which Solzhenitsyn has been able to create in each of his novels a cathedral of human passions with no trace of the scaffolding.

The cathedral metaphor belongs, in fact, to Heinrich Böll—Solzhenitsyn's friend and fellow Nobel Prize winner—who used it to contrast *The First Circle* with other, Western, novels: even the best among them are mere "decorative side chapels," "niches" or "elegant single-family homes" in comparison. Solzhenitsyn, on the other hand, builds a grand—indeed, spiritual—edifice that allows him to "sum up and illuminate an enormous amount of suffering and history." This not without an Aristotelian regard for drama and suspense: the entire span of the action in *The First Circle,* for example, takes place in only three days. Like the masters of old whose cathedrals were not only the product of inspiration and otherworldly aspirations but also of superlative scientific acumen, so Solzhenitsyn fashions his masterpieces with the precision of a mind trained in mathematics and physics—which were, after all, his first professions. Nor could science fail to leave him without ontological commitments. Thus Böll remarks with admiration that *The First Circle* is founded on an integrated and intriguing "materialist metaphysics."



Krasnov realizes the self-contradiction here—materialism being the very repudiation of metaphysics. Yet, far from faulting Böll for it, Krasnov agrees with him: Solzhenitsyn's *Weltanschauung* is by no means simple or literal. Indeed, claims Krasnov, the very tension of such a paradox "suggests the coexistence of two realities" in Solzhenitsyn's work. And that is the essence of polyphony: the coexistence of several—even mutally exclusive — approaches to reality.

Accordingly, the book's subtitle brings into focus Krasnov's main theme: "A Study in the Polyphonic Novel," the style of fiction "distinguished by the strong presence of consciousnesses and voices other than the author." In contrast, the homophonic novel puts forth the author's "viewpoint" through one of the main characters—a paradigm being Tolstoy's Levin in *Anna Karenina.* The polyphonic style is interesting not only from a purely aesthetic point of view but for philosophical reasons as well. According to the Russian critic Mikhail Bakhtin, Dostoyevsky used the device in order to illustrate his own commitment to the autonomy of the individual and to pluralism, his antipathy toward a monolithic worldview and the authoritarianism that results from too simple-minded a conception of human motivations and human values. In Bakhtin's words, Dostoyevsky, "like Goethe's Prometheus, creates not speechless slaves (as Zeus did), but *free* men capable of standing *side by side* with their creator, of disagreeing with him and even rebelling against him." It is Krasnov's thesis that the same is true of Solzhenitsyn, who is

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equally concerned with presenting a variety of viewpoints as compassionately as possible, thus repudiating the stifling dogmatism of "socialist realism" whose palette contains no colors other than crimson.

This thesis is especially important in light of the Western liberal impression that Solzhenitsyn is "authoritarian" and unable to appreciate "democracy" with its disagreements and conflicts, an impression apparently reinforced by Solzhenitsyn's speech delivered in June 1976 at Harvard — so very misunderstood a document. One sees all-too-few references, on the other hand, to Solzhenitsyn's *Letter to the Soviet Leaders* written in 1974, where he begs for tolerance of all religions and all viewpoints, and where he warns against ideology as such — as he does again, even more forcefully, in the monumental *Gulag Archipelago.* In his Nobel Prize speech, moreover, Solzhenitsyn explicitly renounces the role of polemical artist with a univocal message, preferring instead to paint in prose, to illustrate life and emotion as he sees them, thus opposing the official Soviet position on art as a tool to educate and enlighten the masses, to change the human heart instead of accepting and recording its fluctuations. The impartial and careful student, therefore, need not be surprised that Solzhenitsyn's fiction should illustrate his aesthetics, no less than did Dostoyevsky's, and very much in the same vein: both men are passionate believers in the individual. Bakhtin's comments about Dostoyevsky's work could well be applied to Solzhenitsyn:

> One of his principal ideas, brought forth in his polemic with the socialists, was the idea that *man is not a finite and determined number* on which any reliable calculation can be based; man is free and therefore capable of violating any advance definition of him.

As one of the characters in *The First Circle* put it: "Something unexpected always turns up."

The bulk of Krasnov's study deals with *The First Circle,* in part because he believes it to be (correctly, I think) Solzhenitsyn's best artistic production. Like Dostoyevsky's *Notes from the House of the Dead* (similarly Dantesque), *The First Circle* takes place in a real setting, yet not too fantastic for its authenticity. Krasnov notes the manifold symbolism of the Special Prison: it is a kind of enchanted castle, where the Antichrist has fettered some of the best minds of Russia to do his evil work (the *sharashka* is in a former "nobleman's nest," as are many of the communist dwellings—from writers' unions to ministries and scientific institutes). It is also a lyceum whose "academicians" discuss the ultimate questions of existence more freely for being in a limbo outside "normal" life, away from the distractions—pleasant as well as noxious—of mundane reality; more importantly, however, the Special Prison is a kind of chapel which makes possible a reenactment of the Christian mysteries. Krasnov comes close to claiming that *The First Circle* is in reality The Newest Testament: its hero Nerzhin, who refuses to compromise his conscience (and whose birthday happens to fall on December 25) will be crucified in the Gulag for defying the Emperor. That crucifixion will be very slow indeed; we see, however, no hope for resurrection—except perhaps for the chronicle itself, and the very existence of the spiritual atmosphere surrounding Nerzhin in this ark of sanity sailing, as if by a miracle, upon the sea of madness that is communism.

Yet the Christian motif is by no means to be too narrowly construed. For it acquires a truly universal quality as Nerzhin refuses to commit himself; when he obliquely confesses to his wife his belief in God, Nerzhin makes reference to the fathers of modern science — Pascal, Newton and Einstein. Krasnov is quick to note this, and emphasizes that "Nerzhin clearly asserts himself as a spokesman for modern progress and for the technocratic segment of the Soviet intelligentsia (which, by the way, in recent years has been increasingly in the forefront of the Soviet human-rights movement)." Hence, given that many members of this group are Jewish, "the reference to Einstein, the founder of the theory of relativity and a Jew, seems especially significant, suggesting that the source of Nerzhin's religious inspiration is not limited to Russia's Orthodox Christian heritage." And it is well to remember, in this context, that the only other regime which repudiated Einstein's theory of relativity besides Stalin's Russia (until the theory's successful applications to warfare technology made it useful to adopt) was, of course, nazi Germany—the land of another, equally Grand (and only slightly less bloodthirsty), Inquisitor.

Krasnov points out that in Dostoyevsky the nefarious Inquisitor is a spokesman for Satan, and the signs are clear that—reified in Stalin—so he was for Solzhenitsyn as well. Yet even Stalin is not painted all black, as neither was Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor. Both characters seem to believe themselves to be "suffering for humanity," to care for their children like Plato's selfless philosopher-king who feels he must control for the sake of order and peace. Stalin is seen to be lonely in his old age, and afraid of death, however monstrous his insatiable desire for power. Evidently, he cannot provide the best example of Solzhenitsyn's polyphony, being, after all, the shadow behind the horror that gives the entire First Circle its infernal quality. Far better examples are the communist Rubin (whom some critics even take to be a spokesman for Solzhenitsyn, while others believe he is an example precisely of that which Solzhenitsyn opposes) and the Nietzschean Sologdin, whose individualism is presented with great sympathy, reminiscent of Dostoyevsky's passionate Dmitri (which is, not accidentally, Sologdin's first name, too).

Krasnov then proceeds to outline the

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polemic aspects of *Cancer Ward* and *August 1914,* more briefly but just as convincingly. The reader leaves the book with a sense of having appreciated Solzhenitsyn anew, of having come a little closer to sharing his complex universe. In the final chapter, Krasnov captures Solzhenitsyn's style in one more paradox by calling it a kind of "spiritual realism." Realism, surely: for if this be fiction it is based on the most direct personal experience; even *August 1914* was researched to the smallest details of battlefield action. At the same time, spirituality is the prime quality of Solzhenitsyn's novels, a commitment to the immaterial, the invisible, and, in a sense, to the irrational. For a belief in the power of "a grain of truth to change the whole world," as Solzhenitsyn put it in his Nobel Prize speech, must strike one as irrational—unless it is the ultimately rational, the most eminently sane ideal in a world that seems to leave so little room for freedom, where the genuine harmony of many voices is so often repudiated in favor of a monophonic plainsong worshipping nothing, not even man. As against the lonely chant, a grain of truth may well go a long way. □

Tele-debasing Politics

John Bartlow Martin: *The Televising of Heller;* Doubleday & Co., New York.

Ron Powers: *Face Value;* Delacorte Press; New York.

by Edward J. Lynch

Television, according to the enlightened opinion of our day, is a blot upon our cultural existence. The tube invites its viewers passively to observe transitory and illusory phenomena, allowing exposure to a myriad of messages, but examination of none. The medium does not encourage reflection, and cannot permit dialogue between the viewers and those viewed. Using an edited sequence of visual illusions, this reductive medium lures people away from reading, thereby contributing to the decline of literacy among us. Dependent as it is upon novelty, television abets the process through which a politics of debate is replaced by a politics of slogans and gimmickry. Nothing done on our home screens over the past two decades has altered the accuracy of Newton Minow's characterization of television as a "vast wasteland."

Nothing more accurately depicts the validity of the charges against television than the superficiality of those using competing media to assault the tube. *Network* provided the nation's film industry an opportunity to use a superficial film to satirize the mindlessness of the television industry and audience. *Being There* transforms a book based upon a paltry idea into a comedy which spares customers the pretentiousness of *Network.* Peter Sellers at least realizes that he is joking.

Since Joe McGinnis described *The Selling of the President, 1968,* we have suffered through a deluge of writers willing (and with some clever statistical manipulations, apparently able) to demonstrate several biases in candidate coverage over television, issues viewed on the tube, the efforts of campaign strategists to shape coverage and, they hope, results, and a host of other biases attributed to editors and networks. Commentators have lambasted the tendency of television to present news and current affairs as a form of entertainment. Something allegedly is lost when Barbara Walters, rather than Walter Cronkite, reads the evening news from the Teleprompter. These novels reflect certain worries about the influence of the media on politics. Each moves from one of the marginal myths of liberal America through a plot which would shame the sorriest soap-opera writer to a conclusion which leaves one wondering why anyone might worry about their fantasies.

John Bartlow Martin draws on his familiarity with Illinois politics to cultivate a fantasy which he developed in the wake of the 1968 presidential election. Martin's protagonist, Joe Mackey, is an "idealistic" political worker who holds firmly to a belief that low ratings in early opinion polls doomed Hubert Humphrey's presidential candidacy. Convinced that the vice president would be a loser in November, contributors allegedly withheld the funds with which the not-so-Happy Warrior might have promoted his campaign over the airways. According to the Martin/Mackey illusion, shifts in the polls late in the campaign indicated support which true believers knew was there all along. Some money came, but it was too little, too late. Had the early polls reflected Humphrey's "true" support, or if the campaign had only been a bit longer, the results might have been different, and Americans might have been spared the Nixon presidency.

On the basis of *The Televising of Heller,* John Bartlow Martin will never have grounds to attack television writers for superficial character development. Joseph T. Heller is a United States senator from Illinois running to hold his seat. A product of the fringes of machine politics who had come to terms with Daley without alienating the "Lakefront Liberals," Heller acquired his Senate seat by resigning as governor and having his successor appoint him. Although he cares about all of the appropriate issues, the campaign is close, and late-summer polls show him losing his lead over right-wing Republican Andrews. Over the objection of Joe Mackey, his campaign manager and administrative assistant, Heller hires a media whiz, Richard Cutler, to revitalize his campaign.

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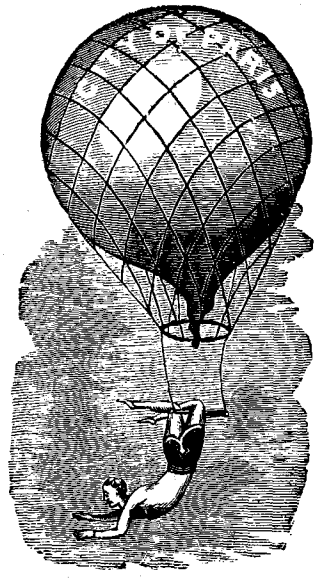
Cutler brings all of the appropriate jargon to the campaign. Strategy shifts from "retail" to "wholesale"—chartered jet-hopping around the state's major media markets. Lo and behold, the trend indicated by the leading poll reverses itself almost immediately (primarily because Cutler uses a media fee to bribe the political scientist running the poll). Heller's media campaign is successful as Andrews is unable to raise the money to air his own forceful (naturally) tube commercials.

Andrews recognizes that some of the results of the tampered poll do not ring true to his experience. A bit of investigation allows him to discover the bribe and to air his charges late in the campaign. Too late, of course. Heller has already been able to capitalize on a blackout in the Chicago area to lead a march on the mayor's office, demonstrating anew his concern for the "real issues"—cities, jobs and welfare, not abortion and national security. Heller wins, but the results are closer than the purchased poll had predicted. Andrews appeals to the Senate and Heller, assuming responsibility for Cutler's perfidy, resigns.

In his resignation statement Heller supports Mackey's analysis of the campaign, which had asserted that the media hype had not really reached the people. Heller admits his culpability for allowing a technician such extensive influence over political judgments. Allegedly only the "real," which is to say spontaneous, actions of the candidate influenced the public's perceptions. Media hype's worst fault is that it really does not succeed in getting the message across, rather than that it reduces reality to the limits of its vision.

The incidents described in the book serve to illustrate the blurred lines between "spontaneous actions" and "media events" for any campaign activity. Whatever Heller does in public, he is always performing for more than the camera. Whether or not events develop according to a prepared script, the essence of any political activity is leadership, which



involves some effort to shape the preferences of citizens. Martin's politicians speak only of "the people," never the "public" or "citizens," terms which would imply an awareness of the common dimension of political activity; they exist to support and serve passions already in the hearts of the electorate, not to inform voters about their common interests. Opponents need never discuss or debate because they are talking past each other to different segments of voters. The major concern of the author is whether the "good guys" or the "bad guys" will win.

Aristotle described politics as a craft concerned with how men might live well together. Martin's politicians only want to know how some transient majority might make the machinery of government serve its material self-interest. One suspects that Martin's corrupted notion of politics predates his acquaintance with television. His effort at a novel sustains both his debased vision of politics and the debased conception of the medium purportedly fictionalized.

Martin's book reflects a preference for the political style of a Gary Hart over a Harry Treleavan, Nixon's television producer who also served as McGinnis's fall guy. Ron Powers's novel, *Face Value,* also plays upon the reduced sense of news which allows Barbara Walters to interview Marie Osmond between presidential candidates. Where other critics find their model newsman in Walter Cronkite or Harry Reasoner, however, Powers raises his critical sights to Geraldo Rivera.

Mark Teller, *Face Value's* excuse for a leading character, has moved from writing sports and the "analysis" of pop culture for a New York newspaper to a position as televised critic of what passes for culture among the pops. An uprooted native of the Ozarks, Teller is uncomfortable in the shallowness of his chosen work environment and unable to return to his family home. The leveling tentacles of the tube now reach across the countryside, subordinating any regionalism once among us to the values of New York and Los Angeles. Although he misses the big pop-music story of the year on his day off, Teller diverts his boss's ire by "discovering" a new comic, Robert Schein. In a routine which would be hilarious for any audience capable of finding humor in Steve Martin, Schein walks drunkenly on stage, silently fondles his microphone, then collapses into a supine pratfall, twitching his foot as he goes.

Schein turns out to be a man with a remarkably marketable "talent." His ultimate acting skill is a blank stare through which he can reflect back whatever feelings his director or his audience wishes to project through him. Although he quickly perceives the nakedness of such a talent, Teller proceeds to garb Schein in critical acclaim, weaving a comical suit for this new emperor of televised taste.

Teller's find soon escapes his control, of course. Through the services of hard-hitting newsfem Jennifer Blade, Robert Schein manages to acquire an agent with conspiratorial designs. The motivating myth of *Face Value* is that the political message of the media is a consciously manipulated product. In the 1950's, the bosses of the rising television networks

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were able to establish a placid conservatism by blacklisting the sensitive and creative talents of the day. In the 1970's, using a more sophisticated understanding of their creation, they hope to return America to an artificial conservatism in the interest of augmented profits.

This fictive conspiracy is masterminded by the Phaëthon Society, under the direction of network president Colonel Eddie Donovan and a few friends. The goal of this conspiracy is to transform Robert Schein from a fall-down comic to a false-front candidate for an office of ultimate influence—one of the seats in the United States Senate representing New York. His campaign strategy stresses media events staged in California and his only expressed issue stance is his opposition to the use of public airwaves to televise the Moscow Olympics. By banning the Olympics from home television, closed-circuit theater interests supporting the Phaëthon Society hope to make a bundle luring folks to their box offices to see the games. For the conspiracy to succeed, New York voters must fall for Schein, Congress must roll over to redeem the campaign pledge of one junior senator with no prior political experience and—presto!—those same voters must forget why they voted for the agent of this conspiracy and race to the box offices to see the Olympics. Forgetting that New York was once represented in the Senate by Jacob Javits and Charles Goodell, it never occurs to Powers or his characters that a catatonic comic might be an improvement. Throughout the electoral process, only culture-critic Teller has the clearness of mind and the purity of heart to attempt to derail this attempt at takeover.

The fraud of these novels is not restricted to the implausible nature of their plots. Critical of the phony promotions which the authors attribute to television, the book jackets brazenly trump these novels into "searing exposés" which get at "the corruption of the old politics by the new technologies." Although fiction is intended to be exaggerated or imaginative rather than a replication of real life, neither Powers nor Martin can fairly be accused of taxing their imaginations. Their characters are all thinly veiled derivations from recognizable people. The authors spare themselves any efforts at character development by portraying them all in one dimension. Although they condemn television as lacking any sense of history or literary merit, the few historical or literary allusions floating between their binders are culled from sophomoric anthologies.

The moral universe of the authors is a faded caricature of the liberalism of our age. For Martin and Powers, having the good guys wear white hats does not quite get the message across. The hats are emblazoned with scarlet "L's," and the characters' knees must jerk in all predictable directions. The natural instincts of their reified people would always accord with these sentiments were it not for the manipulators or the selfish interests which lead folks astray in conservative times. Assuming a cyclical theory of history revolving between periods of activism and ages of quiescence, the authors can avoid any questioning of their own beliefs by clinging to the hope that the left shall have its time again. Arthur Schlesinger has provided a jacket blurb for one of the books. He supplies the ideological and historical perspectives for both.

The moral inversion of this universe is nearly complete. Despite the near-total domination of television by politically liberal people, conspiracies are always found on the right. Complexity in moral choices belongs to authors such as Plato, Shakespeare and Dostoyevsky. Those inclined to criticize the superficiality of television can exercise the literary license necessary to depict the world in black and white. Power in American society is always in some elite conspiracy, however much those who describe the purported conspiracies omit the discussion of elections, now that Mayor Daley is no longer around to count the votes.

Similar inversions of reality lie behind the efforts of John Anderson and his allies of the airwaves to sell the American public an intellectually bankrupt liberal agenda as a "campaign of ideas." The charges that television is superficial and that it encourages the corruption of both politics and culture undoubtedly contain a lot of truth. These novels do not indict that corruption, they contribute to it. □

On Masculinity & Manhood

Leonard Kriegel: *On Men and Manhood;* Hawthorne Books; New York.

by Otto J. Scott

Transition periods are replete with oddities. Styles reflecting opposing extremes appear simultaneously; frauds flourish and genuine scholars are ignored. Sex cults achieve popularity while austere religions enjoy a revival. We are suffering through a transitional period in the United States today, and are surrounded by implausibilities.

One such phenomenon is a weird movement sponsored simultaneously from the gutter and from On High by our elected and appointed rulers, the literati and the media, to promote the idea that the sexes are not only equal, but alike. The academy has made a number of contributions to this movement, including the introduction of sex courses in elementary and high schools, with an attendant rise in illegitimacy, disease and school funding. In recent years, uni-

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Mr. Scott's latest book is The Secret Six: John Brown and the Abolitionist Movement.

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versities' enthusiasm for the equal-sex movement has diminished somewhat, as the shortage of tenured females makes the pro-ERA protestations of the male faculty sound hollow. But the educational sector is only one facet of a large revolutionary scene. Another equally significant facet linked to the women's-liberation movement is the mandated changes in our language. Our government has never before gone quite so deeply into thought control, though revolutionary efforts to force a nation to change its language are hardly new. (The French tried the same thing during their revolution in the 1790's, and that was hardly yesterday.) To have such an effort directed by semiliterates is bizarre, therefore, but barely noticeable in the army of intellectual novelties marshaled against this society.

One side effect of the campaign to eradicate sex difference is, however, somewhat unexpected: a proliferation of differing sexual identifications, and an expansion of the definition of what is considered sexually acceptable, normal or sane. Unisex, a biological fantasy appealing only to eunuchoids, is the name of a shop in midtown Manhattan which sells ambiguous clothing, baubles and accouterments to the sexually blurred. A few seasons back New York City "with-its," shedding their dashikis and Nehru suits, discovered the joys of bisexuality, and hailed it as an advance in the human experience, instead of a regression to the gutters of the later days of the Roman empire. These developments, combined with the rapid increase of transsexuals, inverts and perverts, seem to some to have pushed normal heterosexuals virtually off the stage. It is, therefore, with a pleasant shock that one turns to Dr. Kriegel's soliloquy on manhood to discover traditional, familiar scenes presented in a highly personal and, at times, poetic manner.

When he was eleven years old, Kriegel tells us, he was stricken with polio and "could feel death like a passing presence pausing at the foot of my bed. My father holds my hand. I wonder whether he can feel it, too . . . 'Be brave!' commands my father. 'Be a man!' . . . My father withdraws his hand from mine and I close my eyes. In the morning I wake up and both my father and the yellow oxygen tent are gone. Have I been brave? I wonder. Have I been a man?" That anecdote is only one of many insights in Kriegel's brief but brilliantly written volume. He emerged from the hospital with two useless legs, fully braced, like Franklin Roosevelt's. Like that older man, the handicap did not hold him back; he was able to proceed, on crutches, to Greenwich Village to sow what our forebears called wild oats. Later he married and became the father of sons.

It is clear that Kriegel is proud of his accomplishments. He is able to summon moments from his experience when his senses rose above ordinary levels to reveal—in a flash—a meaning sufficient for a lifetime. One of these occurred in Mount Morris Park when he was fourteen. Fresh from a hydrotherapy session, he sat on a bench, lost in a daydream, and was awakened by the stench of a wino. Eyes still closed, he heard the slurry voice say, "They got you." He reluctantly opened his eyes to regard a black derelict.

> 'Who?' I ask. He laughs. 'They done you buddy,' he insists. 'Don't shit me. I sees what I sees. Man, they done you good.' He palms the bottle of wine in his hand, not even in a paper bag but naked in his large pink palm. I shake my head. I am furious . . . 'Listen,' I want to say, 'You don't understand. There's nothing personal in it. You just get sick. That's all. It's not like being black. You *think* like that, you think someone has done something to you, and you'll go crazy.' But I remain silent, examining his face. It is a face that tells what his survival as a man has cost him. And others. It grates against the beliefs that I have learned to cherish, even at fourteen . . . . It is the face of a man whose only accomplishment has been survival.

That warned him away from the sticky, bittersweet trap of self-pity. "Manhood," he writes now, "escapes victimization . . ." Many fail to grasp that lesson, and live as less than men. But Kriegel does not dwell on that; he is not writing about the world, but about himself in relation to the world. "There are no statistics, no graphs, no charts on which the emotional state of manhood is laid out . . . . [this is] written during one of the most difficult of times for American men . . . because I think that the times promise to become even more difficult for us unless we can look clearly at what we can take from manhood's past." That is an intriguing explanation,

Among the theorists asserting the moral justification for the termination of capitalism, many of the most powerful are in the church. Their influence fans out through a host of organizations and publications, bolstering the socialist campaign with the declaration that their cause is the will of God. Such a pronouncement is something of a discussion-stopper and until recently, most of the dominant theological schools have been so heavily tilted toward the left that there have been few ecclesiastical spokesmen capable of refuting such assertions with solid religious arguments.

. . . A thorough rejection of our economic system remains the basic proposition for most of the economic activism in the American Christian community. The national organizations representing business interests have tended to ignore agitation and criticism from this source except as an industry has been the target of major harassment. Even then, there has been a disinclination to mount any public argument against anyone wearing a round collar. It is often judged best to capitulate and swallow the losses, as the First National Bank of Chicago did in terminating its profitable sale of South African gold coins in response to the agitation of Clergy and Laity Concerned.

The pace of this piecemeal retreat can be expected to accelerate as the activists mobilized under the banner of Christianity become more numerous and more sophisticated in their campaigns.

—from *Persuasion At Work*, June 1980

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but a faintly ominous one. It assumes that the sexual revolution, mandated by an elite, has propelled men in the United States beyond their predecessors into some strange new world. But that note, buried in the introduction of the professor's book, is submerged for some time, while he meditates unchronologically about being or becoming a man.

Since he has chosen to be intensely personal, there is no way the reader can avoid learning more about Leonard Kriegel than might be wise for him to reveal. It is not that his intermittent rage at being unable to walk or run is unexpected: a cripple's rage, and often malice, is a familiar spectacle. It is the extension of that rage that is moot: the assumption, early on, that "no American could afford to be anything less than capable—that was the price of being an American." To learn life from books leads to a sort of blindness, to assumptions formed from fantasies, from inventions. Certainly literature dwells on images of extraordinary competence, of manhood that always walks tall. But in the United States most men do not read such myths with blind acceptance. In the real world, the drafted American heroes who landed at Normandy were accompanied in each LST by men with machine guns, whose orders were to shoot down anyone who turned back.

The youthful Kriegel's indifference to the everyday, in favor of an imaginative search for heroes and the heroic, leads to some appealing reveries and recollections. The Western movie, with its solitary horseman under a vast expanse of sky, is evocatively recalled. These wish-myths held millions of American boys and men in their thrall for several generations: Kriegel dwells on this, recreating John Wayne as Ringo Kid, redresser of injustice, a judge outside the law. Then he traces Hollywood's abandonment of these tales—as though it reflected a shift in attitude of the males of the nation—overlooking the perennial appeal of Robin Hood or the immortality of the tales of Homer. He who turns away from the literary lessons of the ages in favor of expressions of hatred, of distortions of the national past, should not be credited with mirroring reality, should not be forgiven creative crimes. It is in these muted acceptances, however, that Kriegel reflects his contemporaneity. He speaks about actors in films as if they were real persons in real situations—expressions of larger realities. Implicit in this attitude is the assumption that the audience made the films—Ben Stein *(The View from Sunset Boulevard)* could tell Kriegel otherwise. Nevertheless—and it is here that the book rises above its conclusions—his evocations of the afternoons at the movies are valid. From their inception, these spectacles have done much to form American culture into its present astonishing shapes, and Kriegel is wise enough to know, and to recall, how this was done to him.

Another great influence appropriate to a handicapped boy with an inquiring mind was books. It is a pleasure to discover his recollections of Hemingway as personage, celebrity, model and writer. Unlike so many other literateurs, Kriegel does not despise the man he once so greatly admired, but he does believe that one cannot today "read without apologizing for what was once his [Hemingway's] glory." Kriegel loads a great deal of significance onto Hemingway; yet, for all his global fame, Hemingway was not a very American sort of writer. He started out as an overly emotional reporter with a flair for words who became swiftly Europeanized and a pet of the wealthy. His attraction to bullfighting was nearly that of an enamored tourist; nothing he ever wrote added a feather to what Spanish writers had far earlier spun from the arena and its lower-class heroes. Hemingway's emphasis on courage and the posture one assumed against the universe is reflective of Spanish philosophy and deals with qualities seldom expressed by American males. These are avenues Kriegel does not explore; his emphasis is on the personal Hemingway and his influence upon young men of a literary bent. In this Kriegel's touch is sure and candid and appealing. His conclusion is somewhat stark; he counts Hemingway, because of his suicide, as "one of our losers." That is too curt: the manner of a man's death should not entirely wipe out the accumulations of years of work.

Nevertheless, the professor, leaning on his crutches or swinging down the street, his eyes alert to oil slicks and other perils, has caught us in his reveries. Fatherhood and its responsibilities, conversations with a retired big-league ballplayer turned literature student; episode after episode enlists our interest. There is no doubt that Leonard Kriegel has a right to be proud of himself and his status, his skill and his life. In recent years, however, his hard-won status and confidence seem to have been subjected to a series of shocks: from women's liberation, from colleagues and sons of friends emerging from homosexual closets, from the emergence of blacks, from other manifestations of the sexual revolution. Kriegel's definition of manhood, in other words, has been expanded. He has now decided that "the real issues facing men today are not sexual at all. The real issues still have to do with courage, with the willingness to risk one's substance as a man . . ." He salutes blacks and homosexuals for taking that sort of risk, though not many blacks will thank him for the association.

To this conclusion one must demur. What is under way is not an expansion of manhood, but its diminution into unimportance under the pressures of basically disdainful revolutionaries. Historians have long known that any society which dissolves its definitions of virility and courage into an acceptance of outrage and perversity is in serious trouble. Fortunately the trend of international events is moving us rapidly past the trivial, and toward tests which will plumb the substance of American manhood in ways that will leave little doubt about its quality. □

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Commendables

Gottfried's Lore

Paul Gottfried: ***Conservative Millenarians: The Romantic Experience in Bavaria;*** Fordham University Press; New York.

by Thomas Molnar

This is a slender volume, but fact-filled, thus demanding. Gottfried tackles a relatively rare topic, conservative utopianism, and puts it in the rich framework of history, politics, literature and religion. Assisted by an impressive scholarly apparatus, he shows that a large number of German intellectuals during the 18th and 19th centuries were fighting battles on two related fronts: *against* the desiccating ideology of the Enlightenment and its political-cultural manifestations, and *for* the restoration, also political-cultural, of Catholic teaching. There was also a third front, and, appropriately, the author devotes a great deal of attention to it: the one manned by the "romantic mystics" for whom Catholic restoration was only a steppingstone towards the theocratic state and the "spiritualization of the material world."

The quotation is from Eckartshausen, but it could have been from J. Böhme or even Teilhard. Gottfried's topic and limited space forbid him to dwell on these men—whom I prefer to call "false mystics"—but he does uncover the contributions to the millennial vision of the German idealists Kant, Fichte, Schelling and others. When we remember young Hegel's jubilant cry on first reading Meister Eckhart, *"Here* is our ancestor of all of us!" we realize what an uninterrupted line runs through German speculation, from the medieval mystics of the Rhineland to the period studied by Gottfried—and beyond. The contemporary emphasis, which is as old as the millennial temptation itself, is well perceived by this thorough scholar as he dwells on the romantics' main theme: adherence to the Roman Church is justified until the true church arises in the final age.

Gottfried's topic is so abundant, and he manages to compress it so well, that enough space remains for the play of political influences at the court of Bavaria and at such places as universities and editorial offices. However, the compactness he achieves may actually distract the reader who is not familiar with at least a few of the trends he discusses. But this is only because we are accustomed to bulky volumes with thin content; in this slim volume there is knowledge for an interdisciplinary faculty. □

Dr. Molnar is a frequent contributor to these pages.

Smith's Difference

Kay Nolte Smith: ***The Watcher;*** Coward, McCann & Geoghegan; New York.

The sudden and grotesque death of Martin Granger, founder and director of the Institute for the Study of Cultural and Ethical Values, is followed by an anonymous phone call to the police, and what had appeared to be a freak accident begins to look more like murder. The suspect, a pretty reporter masquerading as Granger's secretary, seems determined to be arrested for his murder. The detective assigned to the case turns out to be the suspect's ex-boyfriend; she had left him several years earlier because his disillusionment with a corrupt judge had convinced him to abandon his law career. Being firmly committed to commitment, she could not bear to see one she loved turn from what seemed to be his destiny. Now, under Granger's influence, several of his proteges (including her husband) seemed to be doing the same thing, and she decided to infiltrate Granger's office to find out why.

The investigation progresses with the usual sprinkling of clues and unexpected developments, culminating in a tumultuous, Perry Mason-style trial. It's an interesting mystery, and certainly captivated this reader, especially toward the end.

But the bookstores are full of good mysteries—what makes *The Watcher* different; why trouble to review yet another? Because Ms. Smith, in her first novel, has rejected the standard liberal dogma. Her hero is a New York City policeman—when was the last time a policeman was portrayed as a human being rather than a brutal automaton? The villain is an East Coast intellectual who proclaims his passionate concern for humanity while wearing custom-made T-shirts. Ms. Smith has projected fanatic egalitarianism to its logical, if horrifying, extreme; even a card-carrying liberal might begin to doubt the wisdom of his ways after reading *The Watcher.* (BK) □

Tales from a Communist Reality

Mircea Eliade: ***The Old Man and the Bureaucrats;*** translated by Mary Park Stevenson; Notre Dame University Press; Notre Dame, Indiana and London.

Raised on Romanian folklore, on the mythology of village songs, Mircea Eliade has spun many a fantastic tale; unencumbered by formality, they speak for longing and hope mixed with resignation—which is not to say despair. Eliade is a master storyteller, captivating and gentle, his language flowing in its Romance rhythms to weave a literary landscape delicate as gossamer, that would be easily torn by a mere skeptical frown were it not for an implicit defiance of skepticism itself.

Set in modern-day Romania, *The Old Man and the Bureaucrats* is about skeptical bureaucrats listening to an elderly school principal reminisce. The privacy of the prison, they hope, will protect the forbidden threads of his curious tales. The old man apparently is not aware that he is breaking the Party rules by succumbing to irrational beliefs about events that defy realistic, "logical" description. Eliade's novella hints at an explanation of the phenomenon, but no more than hints at it. The mystery, by its very nature, will not allow being explained away.

This small book, like his epic tome *The Forbidden Forest* and the scores of short stories Eliade has penned through the years, is less intent on resolving a plot than it is on exploring the elements of a process—the dynamics of imagination at work, the blend of symbol and accident, the interaction of petty, even abject men with those who are magnificent and larger than life, the antithesis of fable and fact. Eliade's material is irrevocably romantic, yet dressed in a naturalism his style inherits from the Romanian

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folktale, from the simple man's mythology. That mythology is primitive only in the sense of being primordial and ubiquitous, and it is pagan only in being uncodified as rigid ritual. But its ingredients are part of the chemistry of dream whatever its place on the ladder of civilization, whatever its dialectical stage—ideologues and bureaucrats notwithstanding. (JGP) □

Seriously Speaking

René A. Wormser: ***Conservatively Speaking;*** Wayne E. Dorland Co.; Mendham, New Jersey.

William F. Buckley's introduction tells us that Mr. Wormser authored much of this book while commuting to and from work on the New York City subway. Wormser's powers of concentration are no doubt as strong as his diligent efforts to contribute meaningful analyses of this country's sorry state of affairs. The end result of his efforts is a useful primer of ideological perspectives that can be termed rational and mature before being duly termed conservative.

Dividing our domestic problems into 14 areas of economic, political and cultural life, the author gives us a concise account of liberal engineering over the past half-century. From chapters on the "Liberal Suborning of Education" to "Our Bungled Energy Problem," Mr. Wormser debunks the misconceptions of liberal thinking as he explains the details of our misguided public policy. Much of what he finds wrong in America is a direct result of the liberal "cures" of spending, legislation and regulation. The policies result from the neglect of sound moral and philosophical principles. On our national debt, Mr. Wormser has this to say:

> In accumulating these monumental debts, we have been guilty of an astonishing violation of morality. We seem to have no feeling of guilt in imposing on future generations the burden of supporting and paying off loans which we incurred to fund what we wanted during our lives but were unwilling to pay for.

As counsel to the "Reece Committee" investigating the work of the great foundations in the 50's, Mr. Wormser found himself in a position to observe the reigning liberal establishment firsthand. The committee's conclusion that the distribution of foundation money was biased in favor of state collectivism brought charges of McCarthyism upon him. Later, following the publication of his book, *The Myth of the Good and Bad Nations,* Mr. Wormser felt the wrath of liberal censorship.

Conservatively Speaking is not a novelty of ideas and thought. It is an instructive manual of how the conservative impulse of mind has been systematically and protractedly caged, censored, obliterated and maimed during an overextended period of the history of this society. (RV) □

In Focus

Discourse & Power

Michel Foucault: ***The History of Sexuality: Volume 1, An Introduction;*** translated by Robert Hurley; Pantheon Books; New York.

This is the first (slim) volume of Mr. Foucault's—a French philosopher and cultural critic very much *en vogue (College de France,* the site of Parisian hip scholarship for centuries)—larger opus on sexuality. During the 70's this subject became a sort of medieval-like, everlasting, sacrosanct divagation on divinity as the ultimate determinant of human nature and fate. It was and still is conducted in endless, more-or-less scholarly, but always spiritually ecstatic, monologues by more-or-less high-minded apologetes, but it never evolved into a coherent debate because the monistic premise, that sex is the prime cause of the universe and humanity, is non-negotiable; thus any other point of view is necessarily excluded. In this respect, Mr. Foucault brings no news: he deems the discourse on sexual matters to be an absolutized value, civilization's basic achievement, a road to the betterment of mankind, but he fails to notice or mention the one-sidedness, orthodoxy, canonicity of such an argumentation. There are plenty of us, these days, who have had second thoughts about silence on sexual matters—as oppressive, destructive and warping as it may have proved itself to be throughout the centuries of enforced morality or social repression. Mr. Foucault does not come across clearly enough in asserting what he sees as the origin of evil: the excessive verbosity or the disciplinary discretion about things sexual. Professor Freud once expressed the supposition that sexual discretion might be a source of all civilities, which might have been too radically conservative a position, but one that desperately needs to be repeated constantly in a world where therapy has come to be confused with religion. Moreover, some of us have begun to see that the across-the-board abolition of this reticence may be a causal factor in our social misfortunes and even worse woes—on both an individual and civilizational level.

I do not want to prejudge Mr. Foucault's larger argument, which he promises to present in future volumes. From the prolegomenon, however, he strikes me as a bit of a prattler: he wallows suspiciously in wordage to establish the notion of power as the catalyst of every idea of sexuality conceived by Western thought. This is a slangy epistemology, intellectually fashionable, but one that observes more than explains. One acquires an uneasy feeling that he knows more about speaking on his chosen subject than about the subject itself, which somehow runs counter to the genuine French heritage of erotic wisdom and the French tradition of subtle irony in this field. He sees in an absolute discourse on sex the transcendental and formative element of our common humanness, the prime fabric of our perceptions, the texture of our consciousness, the yeast of all social propensities. He seems rather oblivious to the circumstance that sexuality is perhaps more a matter of individual feelings than sociological formulations, and its gist is experience, not talk or dissertation. He appears to have no need to distinguish between repression and sublimation of sexual conventions, mores and desires, as if Western culture were unaffected by this momentous distinction. "Discourse" and "power" as the key words to the sexual megacosm give Mr. Foucault's approach the smack of intellectual pomposity, and they finally leave an impression of imposed peremptoriness rather than of an intellectual inference backed by both profound learning and respectable sensibility. □

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Screen

Stylish Void

***The Long Riders;* Written by Bill Bryden; Directed by Walter Hill; United Artists.**

by Eric Shapearo

The Western is *epic* literature, whichever its dimension—trash or art. *Epic* means dramatic growth—characters must change, or "develop" as the trade term goes. When they renounce the dynamics of personal drama—shallow, schmaltzy, melodramatic, whichever—there is no epic matter on the pages or the screen, and no Western. At the beginning of *Long Riders* we learn that the legendary brothers—the Jameses, the Youngers, American bad boys/folk heroes—rob banks because, it is suggested, they are dissatisfied "rebels," former Confederate soldiers, challengers of the established order. At the end, they are still robbing banks, with the pretext that some higher sentiments are the basis for their criminality. Some bloody shoot-outs, idealized marriages, torn-apart flesh and sexual ornamentation are put in between, but the men on the screen are exactly the same. Their ideological or patriotic sensitivities have turned into an unintentional farce. Neither the sequence of events nor the travails of human cerebral efforts have made any dent in their dramatic image or their fictional behavior. One leaves them behind on the celluloid gory, dead and boring.

And then there's that remarkable falsity of tone melted into theatricality, stage setting, the very texture of the picture and its particular scenes. It is a visually attractive movie, but its appeal is of a type of advertising-industry excellence. It seems as if it were made by Ralph Lauren and Giorgio Armani for the masculine-fashion section of *Vogue* magazine. It has graphic elegance instead of stylish veracity. But a lack of authenticity can still be stylish, can still turn into a sophisticated parody—but not in this movie. This projection of modish proclivities in shirts, ties, poses, facial expressions and dialogue is a doleful exercise in form, even if a tongue-in-cheek attitude is hinted. It is infinitely worse when these projections affect the literary fabric of the movie. In *The Godfather,* we saw Mafia types, that is criminals, who loved and venerated their families when they were at home. That rang true. Jesse James, shown at home with his family, looks like an impeccable gentleman, a civic leader and the conscience of his community. But a moment ago we saw him killing lawmen, robbing stagecoaches and behaving like a knavish hoodlum—and we are advised by the authors that it's okay because he has political convictions. But Bonnie and Clyde, Charles Manson and Al Capone all had political convictions, and it's even said that Dillinger voted Democratic. The Robin Hood yarn is difficult to make, either in pulp or in high art. This is why Shakespeare never touched the subject.

Finally, the Western mythology of John Ford, perhaps, abused reality, but his legends dealt with human motivation—primitive or falsified as it might have been, but always one notch above the modern, intellectualized (actually debased) versions of the Western epic. Current Hollywood directors, like Peckinpah and in this case Hill, derive their fables from the modern theater, where sensitivities are jarred by naturalistic details of horror—physical or psychological—rather than by the cautionary values of a tale. In the movies, this fashion ends up in a void. It's hard to make a beautifully photographed Western film, full of choreographed images of motion and form, turn out to be empty. *Long Riders* shows how to do it. □

Music

Diz—or: On Creative Dignity

Dizzy Gillespie with Al Fraser: *To Be or Not to Bop;* Doubleday & Co.; New York.

by Douglas A. Ramsey

Nearly forty years ago, Duke Ellington warned Dizzy Gillespie against letting his music be labeled. Gillespie says he didn't know why until it was too late. Whether he could have done anything to prevent the labeling is conjectural. In any event, for better or worse, the music was labeled, and the label was "bebop."

Mr. Ramsey is a jazz musicologist from New Orleans.

In one of the great injustices of American culture, formal commentary on bebop lumped the music with the bizarre clothing, customs and fads which the press publicized in the 1940's with undiscriminating and condescending glee. As a result, the popular impression was that the most important revolution in the first half-century of jazz was the work of a collection of eccentrics in berets and goatees who shook hands in contortions and played wrong notes. The leaders of the movement were occasional accomplices in making bebop seem ludicrous. John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie, one of the music's virtuosos and its greatest teacher, recalls with regret when *Life* magazine cajoled or duped

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him and Benny Carter into a photo session.

> They made us perform a bebop greeting for them. 'Hi-ya, man!' 'Bells man, where you been?' giving the sign of the flatted fifth, a raised open hand.
>
> 'Eel-ya-da!' We gave a three-fingered sign that we were playing triplets, ending with an elaborate handshake. That was supposed to be the bebopper's greeting, but there was no such thing in real life. It was just a bunch of horseplay we went through so they could pretend we were something weird.

Gillespie's propensity to lightheartedness, even comedy, has always belied the seriousness of his musicianship. The meteoric alto saxophonist, Charlie Parker, blazed bebop's most glorious solos, and Gillespie's trumpet virtuosity was the only near match for Parker's. But Parker's talent, honed to dazzling brilliance by the endless woodshedding of his youth, was largely instinctive. Gillespie, a more complete musician if not a better soloist, built his stunning craftsmanship on the most solid theoretical base ever constructed by a modern jazz musician and probably equaled in jazz only by Ellington.

The greatest value of this rambling, repetitious, charming autobiography is that it plainly explains the nature of the bop revolution in which Gillespie was the chief theoretician and leading teacher. Unlike most books by or about musicians, music plays the principal role. Anyone with a reasonably good junior high school music education and a Bugs Bower chord book can sit at the piano and patiently find the chords and chord progressions Gillespie discloses as the evolutionary material that led jazz out of the harmonic restrictions of the swing era.

Using the simple, unadorned harmonies that prevailed until the early 40's, it was possible for musicians to coast along, even to "fake it." But when Gillespie, Parker, Thelonious Monk and others began inverting, substituting and dividing chords, it became necessary for anyone trying to improvise with these men to know exactly where they were going or fail abjectly. Many failed. A few mastered the demanding techniques and survived. Clearly, by Gillespie's own testimony and that of dozens of other musicians interviewed by co-author Fraser, no jazz player has ever known more precisely how every element of his solos related to the harmonic structures of the music. Some of the most sophisticated musicians of the movement, including Miles Davis and Budd Johnson, speak reverently of Gillespie's willingness patiently to unravel the mysteries of bop's often convoluted harmonies. He seemed to have a vocation to teach, and he went about it as if the future of jazz depended on his ability to make the first- and second-generation boppers understand what they were doing. Colleague after colleague speaks with awe of Gillespie's trailblazing musicianship.

Billy Eckstine on Gillespie circa 1940: "Dizzy worked on chord progressions, things like that, finding different ways of doing things. Finding different progressions, alternate ways of using the musical chords, not just the given things that are in the songs. He would work out the alternates and the prettier themes, different progressions to them, and countermelodies, which he still does."

Trumpeter Duke Garrett: "Before, we trumpets had just been screaming and trying to see who could play the loudest and who could get the highest. Then he came out with an intelligent way of constructing solos on the chord structure of a tune and then delivering it in a way that was not an easy way—it was a way that you had to study. And some of us right today have never gotten down to his technique."

Saxophonist and arranger Budd Johnson: "Diz would come in where you were working and sit in with the band. And, like, we'd be jamming. He'd let everybody else play first, and while they were playing he would be telling the piano player, he'd say, 'See, when you get to that chord you make a so-and-so, and you make a so-and-so.' And so when it got to be Dizzy's time to play, now, the piano player has learned the new changes, and this cat would get up there and blow the roof off the joint. Just wash everybody away. And everybody would start to say, 'Man, play that behind me.'"

Kenny Clarke, who pioneered bop drumming: "I saw the rhythmic aspect of it, the way he played and the way he would hum time and things like that. I knew it was avant-garde, ahead of time, so I just fell in with what was going on."

The book is rich in such insights into Gillespie's musical essence, but much of it is transcribed tape interviews full of repetition, half-sentences, incomplete thoughts. This volume is known to have been in preparation for at least 15 years, and this reviewer recalls Gillespie making notes for it as long ago as 1962. Nonetheless, it sometimes has the roughness of a hurried project. Whether through Gillespie's choice of a collaborator, or Doubleday's editing process, the volume is a bit of a jumble. However, it will be a gold mine for biographers to come. It is valuable not only for the musical assessments but for Gillespie's recollections of his childhood in Cheraw, South Carolina, the deprivations and poverty that followed the death of his father, and how the discovery of his talent deflected him from the path toward a sharecropping existence into an extraordinarily productive life. Throughout the book, Gillespie is generous in his recognition of the aid and talents of others. His credit to his boyhood music teacher and mentor, Alice V. Wilson, is touching: one cannot help being moved by her description of Gillespie's presenting her to his Carnegie Hall audience. He is fulsome in his praise of Parker, Monk, Clarke, Bud Powell and others in the development of bop. He helps revive recognition of the importance of pianists Billy Kyle and Clyde Hart as transitional figures

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from swing to bop. He attributes great talent to largely forgotten musicians like trumpeters Bobby Moore and Willie Nelson.

In a recent issue, *Down Beat* magazine carried an interview with a prominent jazz artist and repertoire director who expounded on the need for musicians to accommodate the requirements and compromises of business if they are to succeed. Gillespie, whose lack of artistic compromise is legendary, has received that advice throughout his career, and his response to those who urged him to sell out in order to reach a wider audience should be required reading for the young musicians being guided by that A & R man:

> We never carried big crowds because jazz is strictly an art form, and so there was always a division between jazz and what other people were doing who were not really participating in a creative art form. Those other things people were doing were not creative; they were pretty, manufactured meaningless tinsel rolling off an assembly line. □

The American Proscenium

Decline & Fall

There's little more telling proof that we are going through an epoch of decline and, perhaps, downfall than the cowardly avoidance of responsibility for their errors by those who have not lived up to the expectations vested in them. The behavioral nihilism of our upper classes is one side of the coin; the active refusal to pay for one's sins on the main public stage is another. Every evening these days, we can see on television how our president vehemently rejects any responsibility for the disasters of his tenure. Mr. Kennedy fiercely dismisses the very idea of paying his dues, even though the public has decisively condemned his insouciance about his own past; there are few in America now who doubt that he is a lesser man precisely because he seems so unconcerned with and untormented by the shadiness of the truth about himself. The day after the calamitous "rescue attempt in Iran," Americans could see Defense Secretary Harold Brown and General David Jones, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, behind a battery of microphones telling us about the glory of our grotesque debacle in the Iranian desert. "We can all be proud of the brave men who undertook this mission," Mr. Brown said. Yes, we can, but can we be proud of Mr. Brown and General Jones? Were they proud of themselves? And if not, why did they not describe their humility? Why did they not admit their part, their responsibility in that dismal farce that made us a laughingstock among nations? Why do they hide their blunders and their ineptitude behind the bodies of soldiers fallen in the line of duty? And who will pay for those blunders when the Browns and Joneses are still cashing their checks for being undignified bunglers? In another time, ministers and generals who were responsible for blood spilled in vain knew how to resign—if they had any sense of honor—or they were forced to go if they had not.

What will happen to us?

Anderson

Congressman John Anderson, the 1980 independent candidate for president, is from the town where this journal makes its home, so we *should* know something about him which would be worthwhile to convey to the rest of the country. But we do not know very much. What we do know is that by now, after his 20-odd years as the district's representative, a considerable number of Rockfordians believe him to be a Washington, D.C. envoy to Rockford rather than vice versa. We also know that during his last campaign for his congressional seat, which he barely survived, he spoke very little about his positions, programs or ideas, and instead lavishly castigated those who disagreed with him, calling them "small-minded people with gimlet eyes." Finally, we remember that he kept accusing his opponent of having sold out to some unnamed, sinister financial cabals—while Mr. Anderson was the recipient of funds from large corporations in both Illinois and New York City.

The reason we know so little about Mr. Anderson is that, perhaps, there is very little in him which could add to the general knowledge about American politicians of the last quarter of our century. They all want to be elected to, or nominated for, public office, and the vast majority of them consider the idea of pleasing everybody—at the expense of logic and rationality—as the best means to this end. Only the *methods* of ingratiating oneself into the popular awareness vary—the political principle remains the same. Mr. Anderson's method is, first and foremost, based on wooing the love of the liberal media which, in turn, have a solid, intimate relationship with that territory of America that stretches from Madison Avenue to suburbia to the large universities—where students are as eagerly "progressive" and "enlightened" as they are susceptible to the media hype. Mr. Anderson took aim at this segment of the political audience, and it must be said that he succeeded superbly.

Early this year, Mr. Anderson set out to capture the Republican nomination, and he suffered defeat after defeat in the voting booths: the most painful, even humiliating, one in his native Illinois. And here, his love affair with the media proved its nourishing strength, its tenderly supportive quality: whenever Mr. Anderson lost, *Time* magazine, the *Chicago Tribune* and NBC commentators announced him to a perplexed America as a moral winner. After Mr. Anderson had ultimately been elimi-

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nated from the Republican contest, he declared himself to be an independent candidate for the presidency. At that moment, he became the polls' pol: sympathetic pollsters working for television and giant liberal press outfits began to construct questions like: "Would you vote for John Anderson on a crisp, sunny November day, when you had nothing better to do and knew nothing about him?" Whatever percentage of the polled answered that they didn't give a damn if only the weather was good, the networks and liberal press organs proclaimed Anderson's growing appeal to the electorate. It slowly began to look as if Mr. Anderson were not an independent, but the candidate of the Network Party. NBC has so obviously decided that he must be president that we begin to wonder about that company's stake in it: will we be ruled by NBC if Mr. Anderson wins?

As of now, there's little doubt that Mr. Anderson is a media creation rather than a genuine political occurrence. The mechanism of creating him is identical to the method of fabricating a best seller: whatever the value of a book, a demand can be created for it; then follows the claim that the book is extraordinary because the public buys it, which means people want it. Then the media begin frantically to report on the wishes of the public, thus increasing the demand —and so goes the magic circle. If it later becomes clear that the book was objectionable, the media wash their hands of it in a familiar way: it's not their fault that the public wants bad books; they only communicate the public's penchant as news.

The so-called "Anderson difference," with which the media work to create his image, is as simple as it is suspicious. Mr. Anderson is presented to America as the only "man of ideas" in the field of candidates, as the only "issue-oriented" candidate. Both assumptions are shrewd and patently false, and both have proved to be sure-fire winners in the age of tube politics. Everything is an issue and everybody has ideas about the society, the state, power, making a living, our system, other systems, who's good to us in the world and who is not. However, what the liberal media have peremptorily decreed is that only certain issues *are* issues, and only certain ideas *are* ideas—everything else is denounced as political carcinogens. Thus, feminism is an issue, jobs are not. If someone is proabortion, he or she is "issue-oriented"; if someone talks about pocketbook economics or what our children are learning in school these days—he or she is not. If one says that we should embrace the Soviets, and assure them that whatever they do to us is all right with us—one is a man (woman) of ideas, but one who ponders whether or not such sentimentality is good for our health is a simpleton. As it turned out, the "issue-oriented" and "idea" cachet conferred on Mr. Anderson by the media triggered a Pavlovian reaction among certain segments of American society—the idealistic university youth, for instance, all those wealthy kids at Yale and Princeton who begin to salivate whenever they hear about someone who is embarking on a modern Robin Hood trip to take from the rich and give to the social workers, who wants to impose a 50¢ gasoline tax, who upholds busing in spite of the fuel conservation he preaches, and who supposedly is both a devout Christian and a thoughtful intellectual. Another segment that immediately canonized Mr. Anderson were those whom *The New Republic* calls "quiche-eaters," whom Mr. Nixon calls "trendies," and whom we call the behavioral left. *Village Voice,* the ideological oracle of New York penthouses, endorsed Mr. Anderson's presence early in the presidential sweepstakes; Mr. Stewart Mott, dean of the Manhattan radical chic, immediately came up with campaign money; California movie tycoons, unionized by Cesar Chavez, instantly recognized in Mr. Anderson their savior. Mr. Anderson reciprocated in a jiffy: a prim Republican with tepidly conservative manners, he immediately offered his wholehearted support for the re-election of Senators McGovern, Church, Culver and company, who have always been the darlings of "quiche-eaters" and crusading students. Recently, he gave an interview to *Playboy* magazine.

The Rockford College Institute is well along in the process of separation from Rockford College. It will operate as a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation known as the Rockford Institute. It will carry on the same activities, publish the same periodicals and meet the subscription, research and other commitments of the predecessor institution.

A formal notice will be mailed as soon as the new status is effective.

It's hard to predict what impact this combined constituency will have on Mr. Anderson's fate. Yet history teaches us that children's crusades, from the Middle Ages to Senator McCarthy's, are routinely routed, while the alliance between the ugly beautiful people and rabidly leftist politicians ends, as a rule, in a political caricature.

Why did such a power as the liberal press hand-pick Mr. Anderson to be the President of the United States? Before we can come up with an unequivocal answer, diverse and multiple factors must be reviewed.

First, Mr. Anderson seems to be an *ideal* media candidate. He has no ideological program whatsoever, at least not one that could be erected upon or extracted from any coherence of moral and philosophical principles. Instead, he has propositions. Put together, they make him a splendid political hybrid, a superbly manageable socioeconomic hermaphrodite. He thus represents *nobody's* thinking, no accumulated tradition of political wisdom, experience or postulation. What he offers is a sociopolitical garage sale—random buyers may come in and find something to their liking. He is a born-again liberal, to be sure, although he rejects such a label. However, something deeply and incoherently liberal must be in him to

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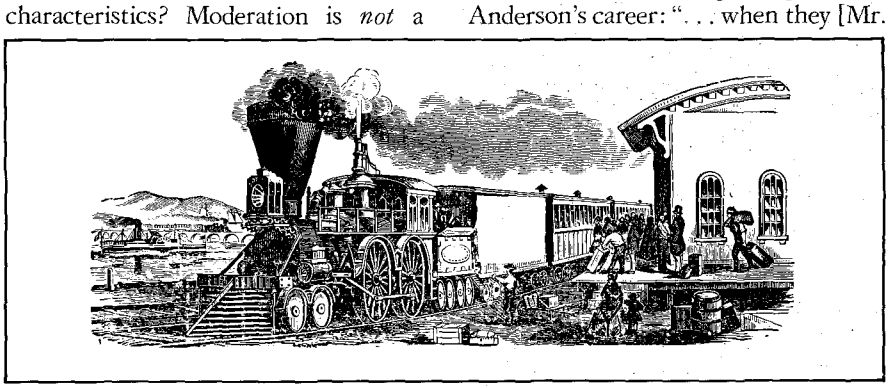
attract the *Village Voice,* even if he terms himself a pious Christian. He never came up with a rebuttal to the adulation of *Playboy's* readers; he does not have the ideological equipment to deal with this kind of problem. "I believe in the power of ideas," he keeps repeating. So does everybody else, but the corollary question must be: *Which* ideas? Here the paucity of Mr. Anderson's reservoir of ideas comes to light: his principle of independence means, in fact, an affirmation of nothing or, at best, very little. Senator McCarthy, at least, ran against the war in Vietnam. Mr. Anderson is running against two other guys. In the beginning, he even used Mr. Carter's slogan "Why Not the Best," but someone must have told him that two bests may amount to such a flop that everybody will be looking for someone who is simply good, decent, and appropriate. In lieu of being decent, Mr. Anderson projects an image of nobleness and perfection, so the press can go on promoting the slogan: "It's not important what he says but who he is." What he says is a hodgepodge of socioeconomic bits and pieces. "He is a fiscal conservative and a social liberal!" beam the press, and they forge such a nonsensical denomination into an emblem of virtue. But anyone who gives some thought to such a silly combination of words will easily discover the appalling shallowness and muddle which is inherent in it: liberalism is by nature fiscally nonconservative, and the gist of conservatism is a nonliberal grasp of social matters—to combine them is intellectual fraud. In this republic of ours, social liberalism makes *spending* the taxpayers' money a matter of conscience. Fiscal conservatism makes *saving* taxpayers' money a matter of conscience. How one's conscience can be a battleground of two mutually exclusive, contradictory and syncretic impulses and still remain the healthy, functional conscience of a trustworthy politician remains the secret of insouciant columnists like James Reston, who see such an oxymoron as Mr. Anderson's political capital. The *Wall Street Journal* remarked not long ago: "John Anderson has no discernible political philosophy or program that clearly sets him apart from the others. His politics are a mish-mash of left-over Republican views with some vague borrowings from liberal Democrats and he's never suffered from the sin of consistency."

The spiel about being "best" induces some musing. What short memories we have. Four years ago Mr. Carter built his career on a claim to candor and honesty, and we got one of the most devious presidents in history, one who has hoodwinked everybody to whom he ever made any promises. Why should we believe such claims again? Just because Mr. Anderson's hair is whiter and his assurances of honesty are delivered in a Midwestern accent? Isn't there a latent dishonesty in the overeager flaunting of honesty, dignity of looks and religiosity as big personality assets? After all, as we watched the primaries, we saw Mr. Anderson try to win the Republican nomination through the manipulation of Democrats, their votes, their readiness to encroach upon a political process which was not theirs. "He is a genuine moderate!" crow the press. Moderate in what? In conservatism or liberalism or the use of hard liquor? To call Mr. Anderson a "moderate" is about as precise as calling those people who kidnap diplomats "students": certainly, there are some reasons to think that they attend school and nominally can list "student" as their occupation, but isn't there something more to be said about their characteristics? Moderation is *not* a political position, but the media are apt at turning it into an asset. "He is a thinker, a man of unusual intelligence!" goes the slogan that is pushed most often. Mr. Anderson, like Messrs. Reagan and Carter, wrote a book. All three are very, very bad books: Mr. Carter wrote something so trite that it would have difficulty being accepted as a freshman's term paper; Mr. Reagan oversimplified conservatism in his book; Mr. Anderson did the same to religion, which he seems to consider a two-dimensional matter of compassion and grace.

Thus, the final question is: What makes Mr. Anderson go, run, do what he's doing? Many people say that it's an ego trip, using some rich liberals' money. This is perhaps too harsh a judgment; we are not too inclined to see corruption in self-righteousness, even if it is pushed to the limits of obsessive self-importance. However, John Osborne, the respected senior political commentator for *The New Republic,* a liberal journal whose editors have declared their support for Mr. Anderson's quest, wrote: "[John Anderson] . . . is a weak changeling whose principal claim on the presidency is that he wants it." Henry Fairlie, a contributing editor to the same publication, wrote: "He [Anderson] is the opportunist disguised as an idealist: the man who appeals to his conscience to justify any position he takes." In *Newsweek,* which gave Mr. Anderson an exceedingly favorable cover story, we could read a puzzling sentence about the beginning of Mr. Anderson's career: ". . . when they [Mr.



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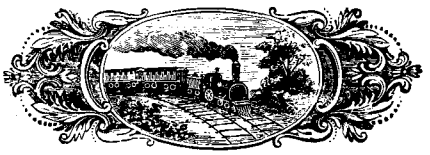
Anderson and his wife] concluded that he had neither the wealth nor the connections to rise very far very fast, they came home to try a different route to their dreams." This route was to travel as an archconservative from Rockford to Washington, D.C. Once there, Mr. Anderson discovered, in the mid-60's, that occasionally bending his course to the left could mean a voyage to felicitous rewards. Finally, he found that forcefully directing his track toward the liberal dogma promised success, prosperity, admiration and the friendship of the opinion-making powers that be. The press maintain loudly that Mr. Anderson's congressional record, zig-zaggy as it is, proves that he only voted his conscience. Curiously enough, his conscience was meticulous in seeing to it that he landed in liberal favor.

The Nation, a magazine which staunchly supports Marxism abroad and socialism at home (paid for with old bourgeois money), held a symposium of its contributors, sponsors and sympathizers who were supposed to express themselves about Mr. Anderson's candidacy. The majority of them enthusiastically declared themselves for it. One of them, Mr. Alan Wolfe, a member of *Nation's* editorial board, said: "Let Anderson run . . . The more disruption the man can cause, the better. To the degree that America is divided, disrupted and disunified, the world is that much safer . . . ." (LT)

Lest You Be Mistaken, Mr. President—

After the death of the ERA in Illinois, President Carter expressed grave concern for *this* country, *this* democracy and *this* civilization. His statement proved that he had completely misunderstood the situation. The repudiation of the ERA was not an act of ideological and political retrogression, nor was it a popular vote against women's rights or equal human rights. It was a rejection of one of the Liberal Culture's tenets, too



many of which have been rammed down the throats of the American people by liberal social engineering, liberal elitism and establishmentarianism. It is not equality and fairness that have been repudiated, but the antihuman excesses of the American Behavioral Left and its totalitarian encroachment in America.

Genuinely related to this event is a piece of socioanalysis which appeared recently in the *New York Times Sunday Magazine.* In this article, a couple of journalists argue that Reagan's current advances are the result of the atomization and social indifference of the "Me Generation," urban narcissism, the antisocial, even antipatriotic, mood of the freshly emancipated younger generation. It requires a lot of intellectual acrobatics to graft the "do-your-own-thing" socioideological motto to Reagan conservatism and the forces behind it. But this is what the *Times* and its subtle-minded opinionmongers tried to do. And then they profess not to understand what happened in Illinois.

President Carter, therefore, has proved himself as narrow-minded as the *Times's* editors with their vaunted perspicacity. Neither he nor they seem to understand the essence of the opposition to the ERA. They refuse to listen to the opponents' arguments, in keeping with the best authoritarian tradition of New York-Washington, D.C. liberalism. Thus, they fail to comprehend two fundamental premises:

—that anti-ERA is a women's movement.
—that at stake are privileges, not rights, which the majority of women in this country recognize instinctively.

The passage of the ERA would bestow enormous privileges on a minority of women with political ambitions and mostly left-radical inclinations—the feminist operators—and welfare women who are victims of economic anomalies and mismanagement. The vast majority of middle-class women, however, both homemakers and professionals, have practically nothing to gain and a lot to lose from their most-often privileged existential and social difference.

But have the liberal ideologists ever really listened to an adversary's argument? □

Journalism

First Amendment

In late June, a conference on drug abuse was held at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons. The title of the two-day symposium was "Drug Abuse in the Modern World: A Perspective for the Eighties." It was sponsored by the Helen Clay Frick Foundation, the Alcoa Foundation and the Gelardin Foundation. Its program was organized in cooperation with the International Medical Council on Drug Use and the American Council on Marijuana. Among its 40-odd speakers were representatives from major universities in the United States, West Germany, Sweden and Switzerland, widely respected authorities on psychiatry, neurology, pharmacology and social medicine, law enforcement officers, military experts, clergymen, social workers and cultural activists.

One of the professions that could have claimed involvement with the social reality of drugs and which had no representation was journalism. Nor did the conference seem to be considered newsworthy by news organizations. Neither CBS cameras nor *New York Times* reporters could be spotted. The reason for this omission may have been that the scientists and social observers who spoke were known to be firmly opposed to the recreational use of narcotics

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and deeply dismayed about their lethalness, their threat to society, their distribution, and—last but not least—against the permissiveness, even malfeasance, of those who are insensitive to the drug problem and its many dimensions. Had it been a gathering of academicians wishing to encourage the drug subculture, praise the innocence and minimize the medically proven perniciousness of mind-altering drugs, both broadcast and print media would have mobbed the auditorium. But after all, the First Amendment is here to protect the journalist's right to decide what he does *not* wish to do—even if what he *doesn't* want to do is to help society combat its most devastating affliction. □

The Message Business

In one of *Time* magazine's recent issues, entitled: "Is Capitalism Working?" anyone could read the following statements:

> Every democracy practices some version of capitalism. The reason is clear: political freedom is impossible without economic freedom . . . while not returning to the earlier hands-off posture, government leaders must recognize the limitations of economic central direction and restore some lost freedom to the free enterprise system.

We would have hoped that some of those wonderful people who were the first to rebel against the merciless sway of the Marxian-socialist-liberal ethos in economics—like Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek, Wilhelm Röpke—would be mentioned as pioneers of *Time's* recent turnabout. It occurred to us, however, that *Time's* editors may not even know of their existence or recognize the impact their work had on Ronald Reagan, William Simon, Jack Kemp and their confreres. Besides, it would be against *Time's* liberal religion to credit avowed nonliberals with correct thinking—be it in economics or literature. After two decades of intensely preaching the superiority of social conscience over free economy (at the same time reaping all possible profits from its capitalistic operations), *Time* is understandably reluctant to inform its readers that someone else was right. □

Wisdom & Merriment

A Gannett "family" newspaper recently reviewed a current movie, and the methodology of criticism is worth noticing. Here is how it works:

Description: "The plot contains the basics of your normal daytime-TV drama: lechery, wife-swapping, seduction and other suburban sports."

Moral evaluation: "The rating is R with semi-nudity, a comic orgy scene and some of the roughest language you'll hear outside the locker room."

Judgment: *"Serial . . .* is a delicious social comedy that is loaded with wisdom, insanity and bellylaughs." □

Liberal Culture

What Have We Lost?

Saint Barbara was a virgin martyr; according to medieval belief, praying to her would assure one of bliss in the moment of death. Santa Barbara, a city in California, is the capital of the hot-tub industry. Or so we can read in the abundant, lavish promotional brochures that reach us from Santa Barbara and are obviously published by inspired hot-tub makers. On the meticulously reproduced covers, vivid pictures of Boschlike configurations and conglomerations of naked bodies of all ages and degrees of attractiveness crowd hot tubs like ostensibly happy sardines. The flashing smiles and facial expressions of beatitude indicate the ultimate in relaxation, according to the promoters. These activities are called "communal bath-taking," "beautiful orgy without sex," "Cannibal Soup," "experiments in human communication through closeness and wetness," "the act of meditating," etc. One overinspired lady proselytizer exults: "Suddenly you realize you are looking at persons instead of bodies; the bareness just makes you feel that each person is easier to get to."

The hot-tub theorists, propagandists, philosophers and salesmen unanimously claim that communal nudity has very little to do with sex. We find it immaterial, although one of the abovementioned *oeuvres* on hot tubs by a certain Leon Elder, an apparent expert on tubology *(Hot Tubs,* published by Vintage Books/Random House, Inc.), includes a chart that enumerates the degrees of intensity of health, sex, sociability, voyeurism and sadomasochism as related to hot-tubbing. After all, pagan aesthetics and mores did not necessarily mean the ultimate in evil in recorded history. The hot-tub fans firmly claim that their practices are sources of endless benefits to mankind—from robust physicalities to serene and happy psyches. Heart trouble, varicose veins and high blood pressure are cured; wholesome, sunny personalities are developed. These may be boons that we gain through hot-tubbing and communal frolics in the buff. But somewhere around the pleistocene era, *homo erectus* discovered a simple principle: you win one, you lose one. Vaccines, an obvious gain, gave us overpopulation; the steam machine, a great step forward, gave us air pollution, and on and on. Thus, hot tubs and concomitant nudity may give us great feelings of relaxation, but they annihilate the sense of physical shame. And the sense of physical shame is the great conditioner of all moral emotions. The Bible does not relate the story of the fig leaf just to boost the "Fruit of the Loom" sales; there's a little more depth to the problem. Not to mention that physical love and its spiritual consequences are unthinkable without and inseparable from the notions of exceptionality, intimacy, privacy, discretion, etc. But to the citizens of Santa Barbara and its booming industry of hygienic innocence this may seem both foolish and reactionary. *Chacun a son goût* in his Cannibal Soup.

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Liberal Censorship

Early in April the famous movie director, King Vidor, was a guest on the late-night talk show *Tomorrow.* Few people can combine insomnia with an ability to tolerate Tom Snyder, but those who can witnessed an interesting and revealing incident.

A short scene from Vidor's 1934 movie, *Our Daily Bread,* was shown. In this scene the hero urges a crowd of fellow victims of the depression to join in setting up a cooperative. In passing, he jokes that at least they'll be no worse off than the pioneers, and there aren't any Indians around to scalp them.

After the film clip ended, Snyder asked Vidor if he thought the remark about the Indians would "get past the censors" today. Vidor replied that he thought it wouldn't.

Is there supposed to be any "censorship" in the movies today? Movie makers seem perfectly free to use any language they please, spill unlimited quantities of fake blood, and turn sex into a simian experience. Aging nazis still plot endlessly in Brazil, or even rise from the dead, but—watch!—communists hardly appear at all. The contemporary world between the Elbe and the Pacific vanished long ago. James Bond fights a de-Italianized Mafia these days, not the KGB. Ghosts and vampires flit endlessly in tales of the supernatural, but the work of scientists is hardly shown. Nuclear reactors melt down, but the technologists who maintain our civilization will never have to worry about being shown. Businessmen must be sinister, otherwise they do not exist. And American pioneers are greedy villains *de rigueur,* even if without them there would still be wigwams in Hollywood instead of the air-conditioned executive suites of the liberal censors. (AJL) □

Editor's Comment

continued from page 5

is liberal social morality. The liberals say, and rightly so, that what they want is a decent and just society. Those who will vote for Mr. Reagan want a decent and just society, too. However, there's a gap between how the liberal establishment, especially the one now ensconced in the Democratic Party, sees social decency and justness, and how a large number of Americans are beginning to perceive it. The country has tried the liberal-Democratic brand of fairness and justice for the last 50 years. It may have been appealing under Roosevelt and Truman, but now a belief is gathering momentum that it has brought us to where we are today—that is, at a point of not-too-great happiness with ourselves. We are slowly breaking down internally, and God knows how long we will be able to defend ourselves against other nations that wish us ill. As a nation, we have a common vision of what and how we should be: it's not a very clear picture, but considering that the liberal media do everything within their formidable power to befoul and bemuddle it, we still do all right. The liberals hatefully prosecute any attempt by the people to pursue their own vision of themselves, free from liberal exegesis and prescription. They have forgotten that the Pilgrims came to this country because they did not want their children to learn untruths about God. An enormous mass of Americans these days object to their children learning perverted catechisms and self-hatred in the public schools. This country has never really ceased to be the country of the Pilgrims, and what a lot of people see as television's corruption of the human spirit is actually the Puritans' rebellion against "oppression of conscience." There is now the climate of a holy war against the tyranny over minds, the liberal spiritual despotism—and the liberals do not want to recognize themselves as its cause. Because they are unable to respond with understanding, they must resort to hatred.

As intellectually unsophisticated as he is, Mr. Reagan defends the values he believes in, and he knows how to translate this righteous and honest defense into the language of politics. His honesty is maliciously disregarded: the liberal press apply, in a literal sense, the adjective "honest" to Mr. Carter and Mr. Anderson; the adjective "conservative," which, as a rule, qualifies Mr. Reagan, stands in their pages, by unspoken convention, for "ill-intentioned." The liberal media monopoly know how to conduct such a semantic operation: they make killers into "authors" and brothel owners into "sexologists"; they have ingrained in the popular consciousness the word "prisoner" as a priori good, and "warden" as a priori bad. These machinations influence the modern politics of images and signs in the most heinous way, breeding irredeemable hatred.

If Mr. Reagan wins the election, it will be because, in spite of all the mud poured on him, he is perceived as an ideological symbol of idealism, a carrier of probity (which, naturally, is not spoken about these days, just as one does not mention that industriousness can make people successful). This idealism and this probity look, for example, to the liberal *New Republic* like "the aroma of sunbelt opportunism." To us, Mr. Carter seemed to be a dishonest, self-serving power-seeker from the outset. Long ago, we wrote about Mr. Carter in the *Chronicles of Culture:* "Since we saw the first flash of his smile on TV, we have had a clear impression of deceptiveness, deviousness, and deftly concealed mediocrity of mind." In the May 24, 1980 issue of *The New Republic,* we could read: ". . . the country is wrong about Carter . . . he's devious as well as inept . . ." That's a quite forthright, if not brutal, formulation, but no subliminal hatred can be detected in it. Whereas elegantly shaped phrases like "mindless Reagan" and "aroma of opportunism" burst with tormenting hostility: regardless of the refinement of the orator, they are spouted from mouths warped by loathsome hatred.

—Leopold Tyrmand

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